

RAZZORCAKE



WE DO OUR PART

THE OBSERVERS • THIS BIKE IS A PIPEBOMB • BLOODBATH AND BEYOND
PAUL ROESSLER • THE ROUTINEERS • ALL-GIRL BAND FILMS



#27 • \$4

REDACTED

It's never been easy. On average, I put sixty to seventy hours a week into *Razorcake*. Basically, our crew does something that's not supposed to happen. Our budget is tiny. We operate out of a small apartment with half of the front room and a bedroom converted into a full-time office. We all work our asses off. In the past ten years, I've learned how to fix computers, how to set up networks, how to troubleshoot software. Not because I want to, but because we don't have the money to hire anybody to do it for us. The stinky underbelly of DIY is finding out that you've got to master mundane and difficult things when you least want to.

Co-founder Sean Carswell and I went on a weeklong tour with our friend and talented poet James Jay up the West Coast, to Seattle and back. It was more like a vacation where we all got to talk about writing and then read our stories to people. Some places, two people showed up. And we read to them. What are we? Rockstars? One show got cancelled. A couple of shows were packed. We skated. We drank. A really cool guy made a *Razorcake* Wrestling Federation t-shirt for us.

The day I returned was terrible. All of the computers were down. The website took a header. I'd just driven six hours on little sleep and all I wanted to do was lie down and face it the next day. Over the next seven days, I scaled that shitberg, found out that our DSL company changed passwords on us again, without notification. Found out that network cards can get fried. Found out that things out of our control fritzed out. All on the same day. A perfect technical storm. It took a week to get back to zero.

I look at putting *Razorcake* together as a marathon with one leg tied to an anvil and folks constantly throwing javelins at us. It's a daily regimen. Melt the glacier. Dripping water puts holes in rocks.

So, I worked for twenty days straight with only one full day off. Why put myself through what sounds like self-inflicted torture? This Is My Fist!, who were on our last cover, gave me my most recent affirmation.

Yesterday, some of us had helped our friend Chris move, and before we moved his stereo, we played the Rhythm Chicken's new 7". In the pauses between furious Chicken overtures, a guy yelled, "Hooray!" We had adopted our battle call.

That evening, a couple bottles of whiskey later, after great sets by Giant Haystacks and the Abi Yoyos, after one of our crew projectile vomited with deft precision and another crewmember suffered a potentially broken collarbone, This Is My Fist! took to the six-inch stage at The Poison Apple in L.A. We yelled and danced so much that stiff people with sourpusses on their faces slunk to the back. We incited underaged hipster dancing. We yelled the shit out of "Hooray!" while raising our arms in perpetual touchdowns. Between songs, Annie the singer and guitarist for TIMF! asked, "What are you saying?"

We responded, arms aloft, in rough unison, "Hooray!"

"Hooray?" she said smiling, "Nobody says hooray any more."

We continued "hooray"ing during every song. And we tried to dance as hard as we had worked. We yelled hooray! so long and so hard that TIMF! played a genuinely spontaneous encore, partially inspired, I was sure at the time, by my hoarse and insightful calling for, "Play one from the seven inch that you haven't played yet!" And they did and it ruled. I haven't seen so many of my friends smiling at the same time for ages. It was sweaty-perfect.

After the set ended and we filtered out, we made our designated driver do some barrel dancing to prove she could drive home safely. The barrel dancing was shaky, but the ride home was laser-true. On the ride home, it hit me, just like the cool air rushing in from the rolled-down window: don't let everyday toil leak the air out of your fun. Work hard at finding, and keeping, what makes you happy... even if you feel like you're staring at the bottom of the shitberg and can't even see the top.

-Todd

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ISSUE #28

August 1st, 2005

ISSUE #29

October 1st, 2005

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Cover photograph taken by Megan Pants

Contact *Razorcake*: **Todd**: retodded@razorcake.com **Sean**: sean@razorcake.com



**Speedway Randy. Poor Man's Sparks:
Emergen-C in beer.**

Thank you list: Vans held together with pickle jar lids thanks to Scott Stanton for the This Bike Is a Pipebomb interview and paintings; Goddamn that's a lotta duct tape thanks to Saucecherry for the TBI-APB photos; Shooting craps on a stop sign thanks to Ryan Leach and Mor Fleischer for the Paul Roessler interview; A bandana AND a mustache AT THE SAME TIME thanks to Jenny Lens for her Paul Roessler photos; Decapitating little kids with drumsticks thanks to Rawl Power for his Paul Roessler photo; Burritos plus punk shows equals HOLY SHIT thanks to Sean Koepenick for the Routineers interview; Stages made of cinder blocks thanks to Ted Tuel for the Routineers photos; Ketchup and mustard on a cake thanks to Amy Abozie for her illustrations and laying out the Routineers interview; Dust rock and roll and the truth! thanks to Jennifer Whiteford for her all-girl band movies article; Kinda looks like Kenny Rogers thanks to Mitch Clem for the illustration in Josh's column; Band-aid covered nipple thanks to Terry Rentzepis for his illustration in Liz Olls column; Here comes the summer thanks to Chris Pretti for the Undertones photo; As if the guy from the Weird Lovemakers could teach somebody guitar thanks to Jason Willis for his comic strip; Jukebox full of Irish jigs thanks to Jim Ruland, Sr., for letting us use his photo; Pants as diapers thanks to Julia Slut for laying out the Bloodbath and Beyond interview; Seriously like this fucking close to hating everything forever but plowing along anyway thanks to Chris Pepus, Ty Forslund, Keith Rosson, Ben Snakepit, Speedway Randy, Mr. Z, Josh Benke, Jimmy Alvarado, Donofthedeat, Jessica Thiringer, Newtim, Cuss Baxter, Kat Jetson, The Lord Kveldfur, Ruckett, Aphid Peewit, Denise Orton, and Brian Mosher for their various and sundry reviews of stuff; Jeff Fox for all the tough love, the joining of wid-

ows and orphans, and candid advice in exchange for beer brats; Naked Rob, Brad at Confounded Books, Chloe at Reading Frenzy, Mark Halverson, Vanessa Part, and Gary McLeod; Thanks for making our heads a little less heavy.

RAZORCAKE

Issue #27 August / September 2005

PO Box 42129,
Los Angeles, CA 90042
www.razorcake.com

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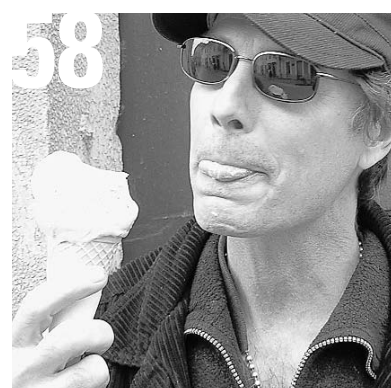
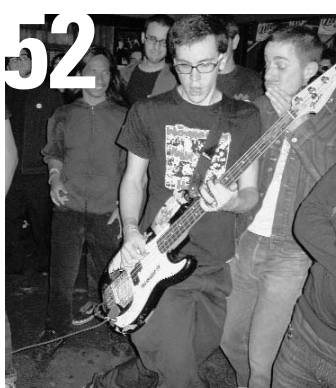
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Razorcake/ Gorsky, Inc. Board of Directors are: Todd Taylor, Sean Carswell, Dan Clarke, Katy Spining, Leo Emil Tober III
This issue of Razorcake and www.razorcake.com were put together by Todd Taylor, Sean Carswell, Josh Lane, Megan Pants, Skinny Dan, Amy Adoyzie, Julia Smut, Chris Devlin, and Bradley Williams.

Razorcake is bi-monthly. Issues are \$3.00 ppd. in the US. Yearly subscriptions (six issues) are \$15.00 bulk rate or \$21.00 first class mail. Plus you get some free shit. These prices are only valid for people who live in the US and are not in prison. Issues and subs are more for everyone else (because we have to pay more in postage). Write us and we'll give you a price. Prisoners may receive free single issues of *Razorcake* solely via Books to Prisoners, 92 Pike St., Box A, Seattle, WA 98101. Want to distribute *Razorcake* in the United States? The minimum order is five issues. You have to prepay. For \$10.00, you'll receive five copies of the same issue, sent to you when we do our mailout to all of our distros, big and small. Email retodded@razorcake.com for all the details.



GUERRILLA MY DREAMS

LIZ O

"Well, maybe if you didn't have such shitty taste in music, they would have paid attention to you."

Because Sometimes You Need a Celibate Sex God...

Driving across the San Fernando Valley in rush hour traffic, I popped in a cassette copy of *Strangeways Here We Come*, the final Smiths album. It is the same copy that I purchased at Sam Goody in the Northridge Mall some fifteen years earlier. I went in to buy *Viva Hate*, Morrissey's first solo album, after hearing him interviewed on KROQ while my mom was driving me to the orthodontist. The salesperson, a college-aged guy with oversized glasses and one of those really loud print shirts that have not been in fashion since 1989, told me that I needed to get a Smiths album as well because the Smiths were "like the best band ever." His recommendation, *The Queen Is Dead*, was out of stock, so I picked up *Strangeways*. An hour later, in my bedroom, *Strangeways Here We Come* tied The Cure's *Disintegration* for the title of my favorite album of all time. Little has changed since.

I had not listened to this tape in years, given that I now have the album on several formats. I thought it might unravel the moment I put it into the tape deck. I was wrong. The songs fade away in certain places now—and there are tin sounds where tin sounds should not exist—but it is still audible. So I followed the motion of traffic at 5:00 p.m.—accelerate, brake, repeat—and tried to figure out why I ended up being one of those diehard Morrissey fans who only seem to exist in L.A. these days. I thought about how oppressive the music felt and tried to relate to feeling trapped by the surrounding mountains and smog that was particularly ugly on this day. I thought about it in relationship to being an adolescent misfit. Then I realized that, in true music journalist fashion, I was reading way too much into Morrissey's catalogue. The simple truth was, I just wanted Morrissey. Bad.

I wanted Morrissey in ways that a teenage girl from a Catholic school, where sex ed was limited to pictures of botched abortions, could not fathom. This might have been obvious to everyone around me when I ceremoniously replaced my *Bop Magazine* posters of a seemingly innocent Corey Haim with visions of a shirtless Morrissey taken from the video for

"November Spawned a Monster" or when I came home from his concert with a t-shirt bearing a half-naked Moz and captioned "The Motorcycle Au Pair Boy." I had no idea what a motorcycle au pair boy was, but it didn't really matter.

In June of 1991, Morrissey played Pacific Amphitheatre in Costa Mesa, California. This was his first jaunt to Los Angeles without the Smiths and my first concert. I was fourteen years old and two weeks away from graduating junior high school. My mom and aunt accompanied my sister and me, which is not as embarrassing as it seems since I made both dress in black and Mom did have purple hair at the time. Besides, there was no way we would have made it down to Orange County without them.

The lights dimmed and the crowd chanted "Morrissey" for what seemed like an eternity. I took shallow, anxious breaths and stood on my toes to look for him. My knees locked in fear; could this really be as amazing as I imagined? I held my breath and half-shivered, as though I had jumped into cold water. *This is it. This is it. This is it.*

I felt it the very second he stepped onto that stage, a deep pressure that was all-consuming. I curled my toes so that the stocking-clad tips burrowed into the soles of my Mary Janes and gasped.

"Oh, my God."

There he was: all floppy hair with his scrawny frame visible through a sheer blouse. From about fifteen rows back, I could not see the piercing blue of his eyes, but I could feel that gaze bore through my chest as he sang "Piccadilly Palare."

I didn't want to scream at first, so I clutched the handle of my metal-trimmed black lunchbox as tight as possible. I felt the groove of the handle dig into my palm as my fingertips tingled. An attempt to maintain some sense of composure left me aching.

My screams were muffled by the similar sounds surrounding me, but they were loud, passionate howls that came straight from the gut and rubbed my vocal chords raw. I danced frantically, pulling at my bobbed hair while trying not to avert my eyes from the stage. But there were times

when I had to look away because staring proved too intense.

I wanted to run up towards the stage like the kids in the pit did. I wanted to feel the sweat off of his stomach as he writhed and grab a piece of the shirt that was, ten minutes into the performance, dangling from his wrists. However, there was a hulking guard watching the gate that stood five rows in front of me and no way I could pass around him. I had to keep my lust at a distance.

When the show ended, forty-five minutes and no encore later, I could barely stand, let alone speak. I smirked through a mess of hair that had grown curly and damp with humidity for the rest of the night, feeling kind of rebellious, kind of like an adult. I probably should have gone to confession for the great sin of dirty thoughts involving a sexually ambiguous Englishman, but I didn't like church much in the first place, so I called my best friend.

"Morrissey is the celibate sex god!" I exclaimed.

She laughed. "That's the most ridiculous thing I ever heard."

It sounds terrible to admit that I took a serious musician like Morrissey and completely objectified him. I was a smart girl with a growing interest in feminism and, really, I should have known better. Right? But Morrissey offered something that I could not find in my own neighborhood.

For the past eight years, I had attended a small parochial school and, by the time of our graduation, our class of thirty consisted of eight boys. All eight boys were Napoleon short and had somehow been inspired by *Straight Outta Compton* to embark on a quest for street credibility, regardless of the fact that they rolled up to school in mom's Benz and upgraded Air Jordan models more than annually. There was no way I could do anything other than laugh at them.

Likewise, Morrissey was the antithesis of teenage heartthrobs. He was not a clean-cut boy-next-door, like New Kids On The Block, nor was he a longhaired dude a la Axl Rose. He was something that the suits never would have imagined marketing to fourteen-year-olds. In interviews, Morrissey would proclaim a preference for



Illustration by Terry Rentzepis www.alltenthumbs.com

celibacy, marking himself as neither straight nor gay. That said, any fan could impart upon him any far off desire we wished. The mystery just added to the fan/rock star relationship, what Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl referred to as “parasocial interaction” back in 1956.

But what really made me bite my lip and flutter my eyes was that Morrissey was an intelligent rock star. Here was a guy who could work Keats, Yeats, and Wilde into one song, who could make proper use of the term “sycophantic” in a sentence. And he did it all with a croon that sounded like an exquisite heartbreak.

At fourteen, I was a beret-wearing, Sylvia Plath-reading, poetry-scrawling nerd. I had a hard time making friends, let alone finding dates. But like the wallflowers of romance novels who suddenly become confident and beautiful after a first affair, my first concert transformed me from a weird-looking pariah to a social outcast who was sort of cool. I would never be popular, but at least now I might be considered interesting.

Two weeks after the Morrissey show, I went on the class trip to Disneyland clad in my brand new concert t-shirt and boasting a Morrissey sticker on my lunchbox.

“You’re going to get in trouble for wearing that shirt,” my best friend warned, as if I cared about matters of dress code anymore.

Much to the chagrin of my equally nerdy, yet boy-crazed friends, the hotties from Whittier who we met in line for the Matterhorn spent most of the day ignoring them and talking to me. It wasn’t anything major. We were just discussing the concert in minute detail and listening to Morrissey’s live KROQ sessions that I had taped off the radio the night before, but it was enough to drive the other girls into a fit.

Liz and the Whittier Boys became the topic of conversation for the two-hour ride home. After listening to a string of remarks so catty that they could not even qualify as backhanded compliments, I put my book down and sat up with all the poise of an adult.

“Well, maybe if you didn’t have such shitty taste in music, they would have paid attention to you.”

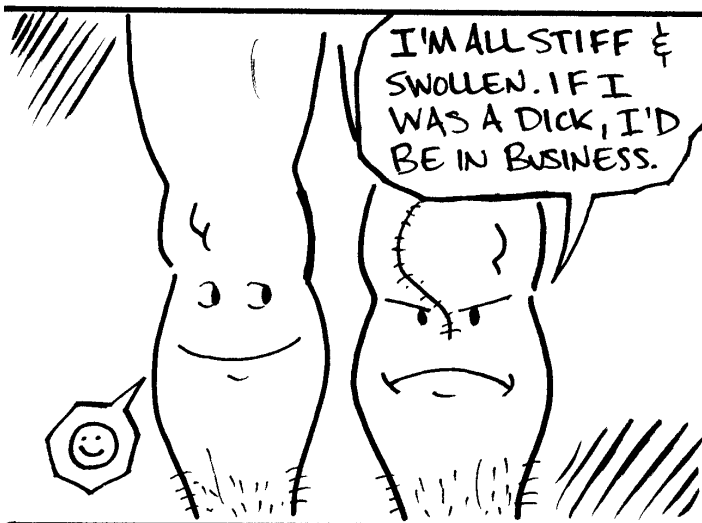
I may not have grown more mature through the imagined affair with a sophisticated Englishman, but now I could at least put forth the airs of an adult.

—Liz O.



SHIZZVILLE

KNEE SURGERY SUCKS!!



ART.
6-05



LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

"When I left Vietnam the poker game was going into its third year of continual operation."

WAR STORIES

Part 1 of 3

P Punk rock musicians are a lot like military veterans. No, that's not a misprint. One of the things I love about *Razorcake* interviews is how the musicians can always be counted on to tell war stories about their adventures on the road and in their scene. But as soon as the interviewer puts the focus on the music and suggests that it's vital, important or even great, the punk rockers will deflect the notion with self-deprecating humor or sarcasm, and if the interviewer keeps at it the musicians will get embarrassed or even pissed off and ask them to cut it out. A punk rock musician will tell you if it was a good show or a bad show, but if it was bad they'll blame themselves and if it was

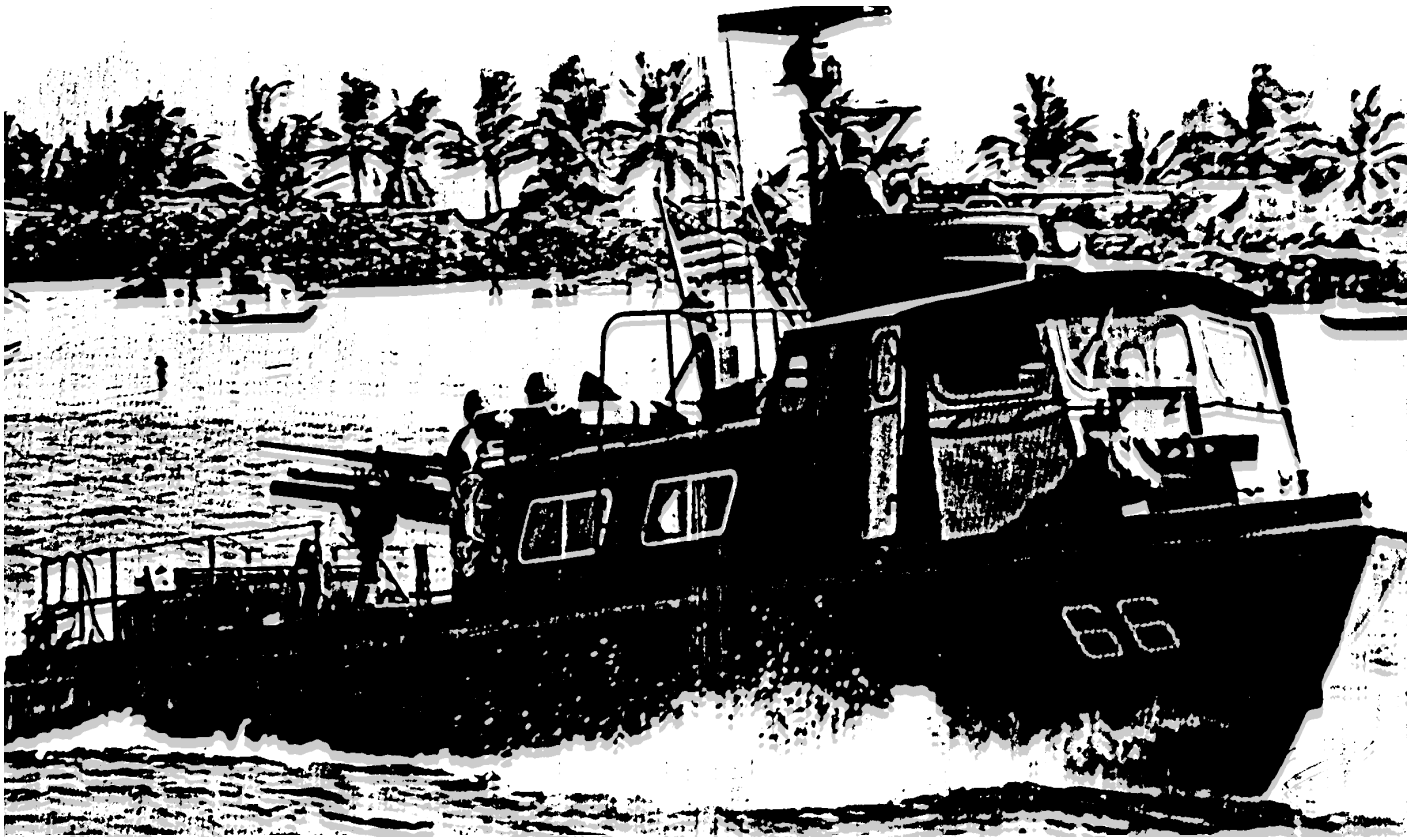
good they'll refuse to take credit for it, they were simply there. And so it is with combat veterans.

I was born while my father was in Vietnam and like most vets, he never really talked about his service—with me or anyone else. All I knew was that he was the OINC (Officer in Charge) of a PCF (Patrol Craft Fast or Swift Boat), which were much bigger and faster than the PBRs (Patrol Boat River) that ferried Martin Sheen downriver in *Apocalypse Now*. When John Kerry made his war record in Vietnam a central platform of his election campaign last year, Swift Boats became a household name thanks to the special interest group that succeeded in discrediting John Kerry's war record.

Suffice to say my father and I have very

different politics, so when he told me he was a member of the organization I was stunned. I asked him to explain his reasons and he did so in great detail. Then something amazing happened. While describing for me what John Kerry did and did not do while he was in Vietnam, my father started talking about his own experiences in the country. I kept asking questions and he kept answering them, even though we had opposing ideas as to who should be the next Commander-in-Chief.

After the election, the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth had a Mission Accomplished Banquet—at Disney World of all places—and my father invited me as his guest. I went, but I brought my tape recorder with me, and I recorded hours of



stories I'd never heard before. I didn't interview my father with the idea of publishing it here in *Razorcake* or anywhere else for that matter. I did it for personal reasons, but while I was transcribing the interview I realized there was very little war in his war stories, and a whole lot of drinking, gambling, and listening to music. Sound familiar?

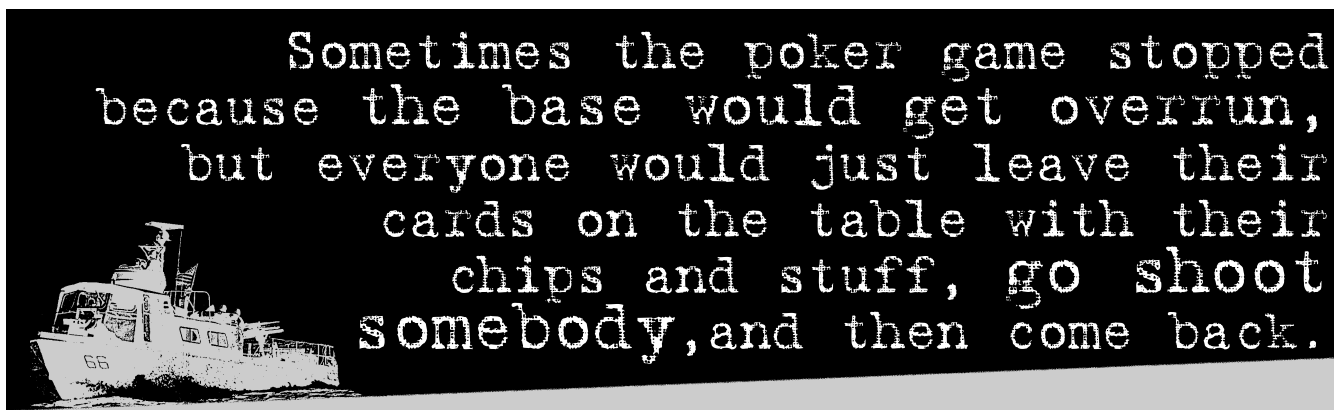
These interviews took place over the course of two days at the end of January 2005, on the grounds of the Dolphin Hotel in Orlando, Florida. They begin, appropriately enough, onboard the boat that ferries hotel guests around a man-made lake.

went through all this trouble since the Viet Cong were not using any kind of codes. They would be in four-letter groups, and when you broke that group it represented one letter in a word. So you can imagine then if you wanted to say something like "The quick brown fox jumped over the whatever," it would take you all day to assemble the code.

Lazy Mick: So it kept the crypto-analysts busy.

Jim Ruland: When a message was sent, it didn't matter whether it was addressed to you or not, anyone who was out there on the circuit would have their radiomen decrypt it, not because they were nosey,

R&R (rest and relaxation) center so you felt a little bit ridiculous being out there in full battle array watching all these Air Force guys swimming. It made no sense whatsoever. But the rest of it was more like you would think it would be, but still we all hated India. So it was a long time out there and I wasn't the only one impatient for the patrol to be over because as the other boats broke the encrypted message, they started sending their own messages to us, and they too were all encrypted. At this point the radioman is really hating life, but pretty soon he doesn't have to break the code groups anymore because they all said the same thing: "Give every man his dew."



Lazy Mick: Let's start with the Tullamore Dew story.

Jim Ruland: The story begins when you were conceived and I went to Vietnam and your mother sent a bottle of Tullamore Dew, cleverly concealed inside a loaf of bread. You have to remember that until a few years ago, the whiskey came in an earthen crock.

Lazy Mick: Like a bottle of poteen [Irish moonshine, pronounced po-cheen.]

Jim Ruland: Right. On one side of the crock it said, "Give every man his dew," and on the other side it said the same thing only in Gaelic. So depending on which way you faced the crock you could either read it or you couldn't. When the crock of Irish whiskey arrived in Vietnam with the note explaining that it was to be opened on the occasion of your birth, it was immediately placed in a conspicuous shelf and for the next several months all anyone ever did was look at it, and salivate a little, and repeat the mantra...

Lazy Mick: "Give every man his dew."

Jim Ruland: And then the great day came. I was out on patrol in the southernmost patrol area, designated 3-India. The message came over on the radio circuit but it was encrypted using a code that we were issued and the code changed every day. So when you went out on patrol you normally had two or three days worth of code table and they were sealed. If your patrol was curtailed for any reason, then you had to return the unused days with the seals intact or otherwise people would say, "What's this?" It was never clear to me why we

although they probably were, but because it was good training for the radiomen. The radiomen hated this because there was nothing that you ever learned from it other than the tedium of knowing that today Bravo Tango Foxtrot Echo meant "E." So when the message came in it was addressed to me personally, which was unusual, because if it were any kind of operational thing it would be addressed to the unit. My radioman didn't need any instruction, but all the radiomen on all the other boats on patrol were all doing the same damn thing: breaking this message. What the message said when it was decoded was, "To the Officer-in-Charge of Patrol Craft 41: You are the father of a son. Mother and son doing fine." And it was sent from the American Red Cross. So my crew congratulated me...

[At that moment the boat was making its approach to the pier and collided with the piling, sending a mild tremor throughout the boat, to which my father responded, "You would think that someone who does this everyday would know what they were doing." There are few things my father can't abide, bad seamanship being chief among them.]

Lazy Mick: Back to our story...

Jim Ruland: We got a long ways to go before our patrol is over. 3-India is the largest patrol area and everybody hated it because it was far away. So after you were done, you had a good three-plus hours to scoot home. We also hated it because nothing ever happened there. A quarter of the patrol area was where the Air Force had an

Lazy Mick: So my arrival was greatly anticipated by the men of Coastal Division 15.

Jim Ruland: That's right. When we get back, it's the next day. The first thing you do when you get in from patrol is get the boat ready to go out on patrol because you never know when that's going to have to happen. Sometimes even if you weren't going out on patrol, in the middle of the night you'd have to use them as defensive weapons. The armaments on the boat were the only things we had to protect the base. So the first thing you do when you get in is always the last thing you really felt like doing, and that's to re-arm, re-fuel, re-provision and make the boat ready in all respects to get underway again. Well, at this point anticipation in our little makeshift Officer's Club had reached fever pitch. The "Give every man his dew" chant was now almost audible down on the dock. When I finally did come through the door I was welcomed with a great cheer and a conspicuous lack of questions about how the mother was or how the son was, or how many fingers and toes. The focus was all on the damn Dew. Once that was done, once the crock was cracked, then all the normal kinds of social exchange occurred.

Lazy Mick: Great story.

Jim Ruland: There's another that's almost akin to that, though certainly it's not as important, especially to you, and that was the day that a 200-record jukebox arrived at the Officer's Club without any records. We had this jukebox for about a month but we didn't have any records. So after several weeks of looking at this state-of-the-art



Jim Ruland Sr.

jukebox, which we couldn't get to make any noise, your mother sent over some 45s that I'd asked for the day the jukebox arrived without any records. She sent over five records. Curiously, someone else had done the same thing and they sent over three or four records. Chief amongst their group was Otis Redding's "Sitting on the Dock of a Bay," which to this day, when I hear it, my first impulse is to run up and squelch the sound because I've heard it a million fucking times, all in the space of three weeks. Your mother, on the other hand, sent the Unicorn song. [Schlock Irish sing-a-long.]

Lazy Mick: Oh God.

Jim Ruland: Which I hated. I even hated it before that whole siege started. Then she sent...

Lazy Mick: Ruthie Morrissey?

Jim Ruland: Yep, "I Wouldn't Trade the Silver in My Mother's Hair for All the Gold in the World." That was not an instant success among the rest of the troops. The third one was Ronnie Drew and the Dubliners. The song about "What's this head upon the bed where my old head should be?" ("Seven Drunken Days, Seven Drunken Nights")

Lazy Mick: That's not a good song for guys away from home.

Jim Ruland: No. I think there was a Wolf Tones in there, but anyway there were five Irish songs. So we had like eight records: five Irish records and "Sitting on the Dock of a Bay." Come to think of it, this was right around the time that Otis Redding died, which I thought was a very fine idea. You'd sit in the club and these things would play forever.

Lazy Mick: Describe the Officer's Club.

Jim Ruland: Well, we built it ourselves. It was like a Quonset hut but we called it the Club. It had a little patio. It didn't overlook anything, but you could sit out there. The main feature of the Club was a huge ship's fender that we had up on a tripod that we used as a bladder so that we could have fresh water. We'd fill up the bladder and there was a little tube that went from the bladder to the ice machine so you could have ice in your drink without poisoning yourself. The other main features were a horseshoe-shaped bar, a poker table, and a couple of other smaller tables. We didn't have anyone to tend bar. At first, everybody wanted to tend bar, then nobody wanted to do it.

Lazy Mick: Too many customers?

Jim Ruland: You'd be going out on patrol again tomorrow, so what do I need to do this for? So without anyone to volunteer to tend bar, we had to think of a different scheme for charging for drinks and stuff. So we got the idea to charge by the hour. And that's what we did: we charged thirty cents an hour. It didn't matter if you were drinking or not. People would say, "Well I only had a coke." "Shut up, it's only thirty cents." And it wasn't money; it was MPC.

Lazy Mick: Military...

Jim Ruland: I forget what it stands for, but it was script, like Monopoly money. You could only spend it there and you couldn't take it out of the country. So it was weird. You changed your money to MPC as soon as you came in country. It was illegal to have U.S. dollars in the country. So you traded them off and you got MPC. Every time you got paid, you got paid in MPC.

Most of us had allotments going home and just a few bucks left to be paid with, but you'd get your MPC and if you played poker you traded your MPC funny money in for chips. So you're now another step removed from the reality of what it is you were doing.

Lazy Mick: Was poker a big diversion?

Jim Ruland: When I left Vietnam the poker game was going into its third year of continual operation. The poker game never ended. The poker game went nonstop. People would come and go off patrol at all times of day and night, so the game never stopped. There were usually three or four people waiting to get in. So it was the only constant thing in your life. Sometimes it stopped because the base would get overrun, but everyone would just leave their cards on the table with their chips and stuff, go shoot somebody, and then come back. The dealer would look at the marker that told whose turn it was and say, "So how many cards do you want?" The game was in continual progress my entire tour, I can testify to that, and I was told that it had been going on for a couple years before I got there.

Lazy Mick: So it was more dangerous being at the base than out on patrol?

Jim Ruland: Very definitely. When you're out on patrol, you're focused. You're basically at General Quarters the entire time you're out. Well, most of the time, but you're basically in a combat ready mindset.

...to be continued

-Jim Ruland





I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DALE

You're basically doing tackle maneuvers on the wet ground. Think about it, between you and the ground was a sheet of plastic.

Lawn Dart Darwinism^{and} Slippery Bananas

Ah, once more the skin-damaging rays of summer are upon us. The daylight hours linger longer into the evenings with all of the scraggly, outta-school kids running amok. The sizzling scent of barbecues breeze all around the neighborhood, and the familiar sound of those wonderfully illegal (depending on what state you reside in) fireworks swish, pop, and boom in the air. I don't know about you, but no matter where you find yourself living these days, the summer days remind me of trying to beat the heat when it climbed to record highs.

A favorite way of trying to shake off Mr. Sun included flailing about inside those makeshift pools in our backyard. You know which pools I'm talking about: those little above-the-ground kits that consisted of a two-foot-high piece of sheet metal that, when fastened end to end, made a nifty eight-foot-across pool, complete with a vinyl liner. Besides continually sifting out all the grass that we'd track in and keeping a pH of just enough bleach (yeah, *bleach*—how punk rock is that? Moms didn't fuck around) to keep the algae at bay, the pool was chock full of splashy goodness. The only problem was when the flailing got out of hand (running across the yard and jumping in and roughhousing) the sheet metal would give way and the once-cooling body of water would go running across the lawn. D'oh.

Another way to keep the scorching weather at bay was with blasting the hose with the high-pressure nozzle. Sounds easy enough, right? I'd be staying nice 'n cool while keeping the front and backyards somewhat watered, two birds with one stone, ya know? Once again, my flailing kicked in and soon the house windows and cars out front were getting pelted with high-pressured overspray from me whipping the hose around. So much for the hose. I was a hyper, twitchy kid. What was I gonna do? Get off my back.

The easiest of all ways to simply keep cool was to catch sessions at friends' houses that had built-in pools, which was always fun, especially if they were having backyard parties. While thinking about all of this lately, I tried remembering some of the more popular water/backyard toys out at the time while growing up in elementary school during the mid-'70s through the early '80s. My memory conjured up several and after doing a bit of research, I found out that a couple of these outdoor toys of my years gone by have had official warning notices addressed to the

owner, been recalled, or simply been banned by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

According to the CPSC their goal is "charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from more than 15,000 types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. Deaths, injuries, and property damage from consumer product incidents cost the nation more than \$700 billion annually... The CPSC's work to ensure the safety of consumer products... contributed significantly to the 30 percent decline in the rate of deaths and injuries associated with consumer products over the past 30 years."

All this sounds like a good idea, especially when a company sometimes manufactures something that can be seriously or fatally harmful. For example, a small piece on a baby item that can be pulled or broken off, ending up with the infant choking, or a faulty electrical appliance that could cause electrocution or fire. Without a doubt, these and other situations of the like have to be addressed, but some of the following toys that I did the bit of research on ended up on the CPSC's list. Should they have? Read on and you tell me. Remember that these are all official notices taken from the CPSC's website archive. None of this shit's been made up.

April 13, 1978

Recall of Wham-O Water Wiggle Toy

Wham-O Manufacturing Co., San Gabriel, Calif. announced it is voluntarily stopping sale and recalling its "Water Wiggle" toy. The toy consists of a seven-foot plastic hose attached to an aluminum water-jet nozzle which is covered by a bell-shaped plastic head. The toy is designed to be attached to a garden hose for water fun. Wham-O stated that the recall is occasioned by the death of a four-year-old child in March 1978. The youngster was playing with some other children in his backyard with a dismantled "Water Wiggle," one from which the bell-shaped head had been removed or had come off. The exposed aluminum nozzle became lodged in his mouth and he drowned.

Okay, first things first. I love just about everything and anything that Wham-O came out with over the years. They were really out there when it came to toy invention. That said, there's not a lick of bias when I say this: The same thing could have and proba-

bly has happened when a three- or four-year-old kid dicks around with a garden hose and meets the same fate of those who "fell prey to the ominous Water Wiggle." Better call Home Depot to get those coiled green snakes off the shelves that unsuspectingly fill innocent children's lungs with venomous H₂O. Goodness! What to do? Water the lawn or kill the kids? Gimme a fuckin' break.

March 10, 1980

Wham-O to Correct Potential Hazard in Children's Outdoor Water Toy

A program to correct more than 100,000 outdoor "Fun Fountain" water toys which may cause serious injuries to children is being conducted by the Wham-O Mfg. Co. The toy consists of a clown hat and head which attaches onto the end of a garden hose so that the hat rises in the air when water flows through the clown's head. Children may be inclined to peer into the water outlet and the stream of water could cause serious eye injuries. CPSC so far has been informed of two consumer complaints since June, 1979, involving a six-year-old boy and a seven-year-old boy who suffered eye injuries when struck at close distance by water emitted from the toys. According to the company, the potential hazard has been corrected on all "Fun Fountain" toys manufactured since December 1979 when the toys began to be produced with a water flow control valve to decrease and control the water flow.

Par-don my hard-on, but since when did it seem reasonable, let alone *logical*, to want to peer into something that's kicking out pressurized water? A dunce doing something like this calls to mind when our own Art Fuentes used to dupe a few kids in our elementary school classroom into the "smells like cinnamon" scam. Art would hold open a school textbook with both hands, offering the target to smell where the pages came together near the binding, claiming it had a cinnamon-like aroma. If the target were slow enough to go along with this, Art would then slam the book shut, nearly catching their nose in the process. As far as the kids mentioned above with the eye injuries due to peering into jet streams of water? Get your eye patches on and come over here. Art's got a book he wants to show you and I got a garden hose fitted with my old high-pressure nozzle that has your face written all over it. Dumbasses.

July 30, 1987

Lawn Darts Can Cause Serious or Fatal Head Injuries and Death

The Consumer Product Safety Commission today warns parents not to allow children to play with lawn darts or play near where lawn dart games are being played. Although the tip of lawn dart may appear blunt, when thrown up into the air the lawn dart can penetrate a child's skull. An estimated 6,100 people have been treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries involving lawn darts from 1978 through 1986. In addition to the death of the seven-year-old girl in April, the Commission is aware of one other lawn dart death which involved a four-year-old boy and occurred in 1970. Effective December 19, 1988, all lawn darts are banned from sale in the United States. The Consumer Product Safety Commission urges parents to discard or destroy all lawn darts immediately. They should not be given away since they may be of harm to others.

I'm sure that this one about lawn darts ("Jarts") is the one everyone has heard about time and time again. Funny thing is, the gruesome stories that have been passed on over the years about these "deadly lawn toys" have been ridiculously exaggerated to mythical proportions, making them sound less like a backyard game and more like a weapon from a bad B-movie. There's the one about how people have had an airborne Jart unwillingly shisk-a-bob them in the eye, resulting in pulling the eyeball right out of its socket, or the one of how people's pets ended up being moving targets in a new game of Jarts. And the favorite of mine that I always heard about: straight up Jart fights. All the fun of a good-natured dirt clod fight, only more severe, even more so than when someone always upped the ante to rocks in those clod fights (and you ante-uppers know who you are). As horrible as these three tales of yore sound, something similar along the lines has probably taken place with lawn darts, though I would like to think they didn't. Shit happens and it goes without saying: you play with fire and you're gonna get burned (don't even get me started on the idiocy of literally playing with fire). While poking around further about the whole lawn dart banning, I found a website dedicated to those who buck the system, defending the faith of those who refuse to relinquish their now-illegal, grassy, outdoor fun: <www.jarts.com>. Even though there's a site disclaimer, these folks seem pretty serious about their Jart-a-licious recreations.



Although the tip of lawn dart may appear blunt, when thrown up into the air the lawn dart can penetrate a child's skull.

More power to 'em. What's really making me scratch my monkey noggin' is that the CPSC never really went after regular darts, like the kind you throw in a garage or bar. But then again, the smaller-sized darts aren't like the big ol' nasty "lawn daggers," right? I mean, you wouldn't take these little darts outside, throw them up into the air, and keep your fingers crossed that they wouldn't come down embedding themselves into someone's skull, right? But you *could*. Come to think of it, you could do this with *anything* possessing a sharpened, pointy end. And speaking of sharpened, pointy ends, I'm sending that drunken, bastard relative of William Tell over to your next barbecue. No worries, he don't eat much and he'll show up snookered to the gills, but on a sporting bet, you can challenge him to shoot "that apple" out of

the sky. Hope you like arrows in your burger, cocko.

May 27, 1993

WHAM-O Backyard Water Slides Are Dangerous for Adults and Teenagers

Approximately 9 million Wham-O backyard water slides, manufactured by Kransco and Wham-O. The water slides were sold nationwide from 1961 through February 1992 under the following names: Slip 'N Slide, Super Slip 'N Slide, Slip 'N Splash, White Water Rapids, Fast Track Racers, and Wet Banana. The slides are long plastic sheets with stakes to secure the sheet to a flat lawn free of rocks, mounds, and depressions. Kransco reports that seven adults who used Wham-O slides suffered neck injuries, quadriplegia, or paraplegia.

Three words about this CPSC bulletin release: "Uh, no shir?" As avid a fan of the Slip 'N Slide as a kid, they've been the ample providers of bruises, road rash, and assorted body beatings for as long as I can remember. You're basically doing tackle maneuvers on the wet ground. Think about it: between you and the ground was a sheet of plastic. There was a general rule for these water-drizzling, yellow vinyl sheets of summer. The more plush the lawn you set the Slip 'N Slide up on, the less physical punishment you were gonna endure. That, and clearing the ground of any obstacles. Remember when you got the surprise of that rock that you didn't see on the grass while setting up? Sometimes I think it would have been easier to set it up on our driveway, as the yards would sometimes get a nice and crispy brown due to a gnarly heat wave, along with those little feet-piercing thistle balls that stuck to everything. Without a doubt, the concrete driveway would've awarded us with many broken bones, but at least the downward slope would have guaranteed kickass high speeds with the possibility of a ramp

at the bottom that would launch sliders into a nearby kiddie pool. Hey, I may be on to something here, Wham-O! If I could just figure out a way to soften up the ride, I could help you guys regain the throne of summertime water wackiness. In fact, I should get in contact with the CPSC to find out what I *shouldn't* be including on my design—it would probably speed up the process.

'Til then, kiddies, I hope you're all digging the summer the best way you can. Just be careful you don't go and poke yourself in the eye the next time you're picking your nose. I'd hate to see any one of our ten fingers getting banned, especially my two middle ones.

**I'm Against It
-Designated Dale**

designateddale@yahoo.com





WHO ARE YOU?

“Well, y’know, Me First And The Gimmie Gimmies, no one thinks we’re great but it’s hard not to kinda like us.”

Nardwuar vs. Fat Mike

**Live on C1TR FM 101.9,
Vancouver, BC, Canada**

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Fat Mike: My name is Fat Mike.

Nardwuar: Who are you Fat Mike?

Fat Mike: I’m a nice Jewish man from San Francisco.

Nardwuar: Playing tonight in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Fat Mike: Yeah, we’re playing at Richard’s On Richards, but don’t come.

Nardwuar: Fat Mike, the band that is playing is called Me First And The Gimmie Gimmies. That is the band that you participate in right?

Fat Mike: Occasionally.

Nardwuar: Fat Mike, what did you think about that song I just played there? It was by a band called The Misfits. All fat guys doing Misfits covers with their song “Mommy Can I Go Out and Grill Tonight?”

Fat Mike: [laughs] Uh, I hadn’t heard it.

Nardwuar: Have you heard of The Misfits at all?

Fat Mike: The Misfits or The Misfits?

Nardwuar: Have you heard of The Misfits and have you heard of The Misfits?

Fat Mike: Yeah, in fact as a teenager Nardwuar. I heard your name is Marcus, is that true?

Nardwuar: Could be.

Fat Mike: Okay. Anyway Marcus, I had a devil lock when I was fifteen years old so yeah, I’ve been a Misfits fan for quite a while.

Nardwuar: Well, these guys are called The Misfits and they’re out of Portland, Oregon and the reason I bring them up is your band, Me First And The Gimmie Gimmies, what do you do with cover songs—not to confuse them with The Misfits. The Misfits take Misfits songs and put their own fat twist on it. What do Me First And The Gimmie Gimmies do?

Fat Mike: We make mediocre songs and degrade songs.

Nardwuar: Do you put new lyrics into them or do you keep the original lyrics? Like what’s the difference between The Misfits and Me First And The Gimmie Gimmies?

Fat Mike: Nardwuar, you’re being particularly weird this afternoon.

Nardwuar: Thank you.

Fat Mike: Yeah [laughs], are you not on your medication today?

Nardwuar: Well, I’m building up to something because there is a combination, there is a difference between...

Fat Mike: [laughs]

Nardwuar: Stop making me look...

Fat Mike: So you’re saying there is a slip up in the medication taking today?

Nardwuar: [laughs] No.

Fat Mike: Maybe you took two Wednesday night pills when you... I forgot the question, guy, Marcus.

Nardwuar: I bring this up because there was a description of The Misfits that I found that said [reads] “The Misfits are different. Unlike like NOFX’s, average proportioned Fat Mike, these guys not only look the portly part, but also tweak Misfit lyrics to celebrate the lard ass lifestyle. ‘20 Pies’ and ‘Mommy Can I Go Out and Grill Tonight’ rank among the finest food-based parodies since Weird Al’s gloriously gluttonous ‘Eat It’ and ‘Fat’.” So that is The Misfits.

Fat Mike: Yeah, it makes sense to do that. But it’s kind of like a comedy album. Something that you might find slightly funny once, but I dunno how many times you want to listen to it. The whole difference in that song is two consonants. So, I dunno if that makes much of a difference in a cover song. I don’t know how interesting that makes it.

Nardwuar: So how does that compare with what will be happening tonight with Me First And The Gimmie Gimmies?

Fat Mike: Well, we’ll be loaded and probably be making a large amount of errors and our clothes match.

Nardwuar: Fat Mike, you are from San Francisco, California. There’s a band called Plan 9. Have you seen them? They’re like a Misfits tribute band?

Fat Mike: No. By the way Marcus, we aren’t a tribute band. We are a cover band.

Nardwuar: I’m sorry.

Fat Mike: No. There’s a big difference. We have a rivalry going almost, such as the ones between mimes and clowns.

Nardwuar: I wasn’t actually...

Fat Mike: We’re clowns.

Nardwuar: I wasn’t actually going to go in that direction Fat Mike. I heard that these guys are so authentic in Plan 9 that the lead singer was surgically altered to look like Danzig.

Fat Mike: So he had his legs cut off at the knees?

Nardwuar: Ba-boom! Fat Mike,

Fat Mike: Oh y’know, that was bad. I’m sorry.

Nardwuar: Not the Marcus The Human Serviette radio show. So how do Me First And The Gimmie Gimmies compare to Plan 9? Like Plan 9 will get surgically altered to fit the songs.

What extra distance do Me First And The Gimmie Gimmies add, Fat Mike, to the songs?

Fat Mike: We don’t do a lot, we don’t try hard, less hard than any band in rock ‘n’ roll that I can think of. We don’t write anything. We don’t come up with a lot of original ideas.

Nardwuar: Well, your shirts are amazing. You talked about your shirts. I love the shirts.

Fat Mike: Well thanks, but all that is, is twenty bucks a pop so we’re really not putting that much effort into it.

Nardwuar: Don’t try to fool me on that! I know about wardrobe and assembling a wardrobe. How do you get those shirts because they’re all amazing? They’re not just like twenty bucks. They look really good. How hard is it to get the outfits?

Fat Mike: No. Actually, well we just got back from our second Hawaiian tour. We did four shows out there and we just went to a shop and bought our clothes, so it actually was pretty easy and they were \$19.99.

Nardwuar: How many different outfits do Me First And The Gimmie Gimmies have Fat Mike?

Fat Mike: One.

Nardwuar: Just one? I thought you had a whole bunch. Like, every time I see a photo of you guys you’re wearing a different outfit. It’s really impressive.

Fat Mike: Okay, okay. We have five or six.

Nardwuar: Yeah. Could you explain them perhaps to the listeners out there in radioland Fat Mike?

Fat Mike: I think the listeners in radio land don’t care about our outfits.

Nardwuar: I do! I care! I’m the listener and I’m listening right now. I’m the listener! I’m listening here to Fat Mike. Me First are playing at Richard’s On Richards with Chixdiggit.

Fat Mike: Yeah, there’s enough people here tonight so we don’t need anymore people.

[Nardwuar gets a caller]

Nardwuar: Caller are you there?

Caller#1: Yes, I am, Marcus.

Nardwuar: Go ahead to Fat Mike. No, it’s Nardwuar The Human Serviette, please. Thank you. Caller are you there?

Caller#1: Yeah, I’m here and I’m just thinking I’d sure like to hear more about their wardrobe.

Fat Mike: [laughs] You are a liar.

Nardwuar: Thank you caller. You are the one listener out there, caller.

Caller#1: Yeah, so I’ll leave you guys to it.

Nardwuar: Thank you so much caller and doot doola doot doo...



“We make mediocre songs and degrade songs.”

Caller#1: Me too!

Nardwuar: Well, me first. That would work pretty good. Thank you.

Caller#1: Or, hang on. Actually maybe this works. Just see if this works...

[Presses two keys on phone keypad]

Nardwuar: Thank you.

Fat Mike: So people do care about the wardrobe.

Nardwuar: They do. Maybe you could elaborate a bit?

Fat Mike: Uh, we don't wear drag very often.

Nardwuar: Ba-boom!

Fat Mike: Marcus?

Nardwuar: And we have Fat Mike from Me First And The Gimmie Gimmies on the line. [Nardwuar gets another caller]

Nardwuar: Caller are you there?

Chris Walter: Yes I'm here. It's Chris Walter.

Nardwuar: Fat Mike, I'd like to introduce you to this caller. Chris Walter is originally from Winnipeg, Manitoba and I asked Chris to phone in because he is an expert on all things Stretch-Markian.

Fat Mike: Oh boy.

Nardwuar: And I wondered if you could retell the story of seeing The Stretch Marks and how you love Canadian punk.

Fat Mike: [laughs]

Chris: It was in Hollywood?

Fat Mike: It was in Hollywood, yeah. I saw the Stretch Marks four days in a row. It was their first tour out there and we were singing along to songs and they couldn't believe that because they didn't have any of them recorded yet.

Chris: Well, their songs are very easy to sing along to. It's just like, “Woof woof, it's a dogs world.” I mean like how...

Fat Mike: That's true, but they were still impressed that these three kids showed up at all four shows they played. And then next year they came back and played a couple

other shows and I was looking around for them. And I finally found one of the guys and went “Hey, it's me, Mike. Remember from last year?” And he said, “No.” And that was that.

Chris: Were you crushed or...

Fat Mike: Yeah, I was crushed. But, y'know I was sixteen, so I deserved it. And I get that all the time now. I get kids saying, “Remember last year? Remember we talked for a minute?” And I don't remember them either, but...

Nardwuar: And Chris, actually, believe it or not Fat Mike, actually is pictured on a Stretch Marks 7-inch. Is that true Chris?

Chris: That's right.

Fat Mike: Is it the “Dog's World” one?

Chris: Yeah, on the back. The dance floor was kind of empty because I think there was beer spilt on it and people were fallin' down at that moment, but I seemed to have regained my feet and I was in front of the stage there.

Nardwuar: Chris, is it true also that a Stretch-Marker lives in Vancouver now? A Stretch-Marker could actually go to Me First and thank Fat Mike for seeing them four nights in a row way back in the '80s?

Chris: Well, Dick lives in Burnaby now. I don't see him too often now. Once in a while I do. I have a question for Fat Mike, though.

Fat Mike: Sure.

Chris: How did you end up with a soundman named Limo from Winnipeg?

Fat Mike: I dunno how. We have a manager from Winnipeg. We have a soundman from Winnipeg. We have someone we don't like at all from Winnipeg who hangs out with us. Basically, we hired the entire Gorilla Gorilla band except for Bif Naked.

Chris: Except for Bif. She got left out huh?

Fat Mike: Yeah.

Chris: Aw, poor Bif.

Fat Mike: [laughs] But I dunno.

Winnipeg's always been one of our favorite Canadian cities, but every decently sized Canadian city is a good town, really.

Nardwuar: How about visiting Vancouver for the first time?

Fat Mike: Oh, I've been here a lot of times, Marcus.

Nardwuar: Nardwuar The Human Serviette.

Fat Mike: [laughs]

Nardwuar: Thank you very much Fat Mike. Well, if you want, you can call me Marcus. I dunno, I don't feel as comfortable calling myself Marcus because I think of Marcus Rogers and Marcus Rogers is a local filmmaker that works with D.O.A. D.O.A. are related to Death Sentence, well kind of indirectly. I think there might have been some tie-overs and I wanted to ask you Fat Mike about your first time in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, because didn't you run into the notorious local punk band Death Sentence?

Fat Mike: Yes. What happened is we couldn't get over the border with our equipment and we had a show with Death Sentence. We drove back to Seattle, dropped our equipment off, came back up, made it to through the border, made it to the show in the afternoon and said, “Can we use some of you guys' gear to play?” and they said, “No.” So we didn't get to play. That was 1985.

Nardwuar: Welcome to Canada.

Fat Mike: Yeah.

Chris: I'm gonna have to put that on Syd Savage (Death Sentence guitarist) next time I see him.

Fat Mike: [laughs]

Chris: “Hey, you wouldn't let them use your gear in the '80s.”

Fat Mike: So, we ended up not playing the show and we went to a billiard hall and the pool tables were much too large.

Nardwuar: Chris also is involved with

rock'n'roll too, Fat Mike. And Chris, maybe you want to mention to Fat Mike about your book and what's going to be going on tomorrow night?

CW: I'm having a book launch at the Asfalt Hotel for my new book, *Destroy Canada*. (available at www.punkbooks.com)

Nardwuar: Chris's other book chronicles a lot of the Winnipeg punk scene. Maybe Fat Mike would be interested in picking that one up, right Chris?

Chris: Yeah. It's called *I Was a Punk Before You Were a Punk*. It's a joke we used to say to each other like when we were kids and none of us had been punks for very long and we used to say, "I was a punk before you were a punk."

Fat Mike: Right, but you're talking months though?

Chris: Yeah, back in the early '80s.

Fat Mike: I got that a lot in high school when people would call me a poser.

Chris: And you'd say, "I was a punk before you were a punk."

Fat Mike: No, no, they were punks before me, but we're still talkin' a year.

Chris: Yeah, exactly.

Fat Mike: It was still 1980. They, my friends saw The Germs, so I was a poser.

Chris: Aw man, I wish I saw The Germs.

Nardwuar: But Fat Mike should really pick up this book right, Chris Walter? Because you actually mention the Stretch Marks and there's pictures of you slamming to the Stretch Marks in the book, right?

Chris: Yeah.

Fat Mike: Yeah, well I think we should get this issue over with right now. Who was the best Canadian punk band?

Chris: Personality Crisis.

Fat Mike: That's exactly right. It's Personality Crisis.

Nardwuar: Now, why was that and what was your experience with Personality Crisis Fat Mike?

Fat Mike: Well, they were awesome and I went to go see 'em in Hollywood but they weren't going on for an hour so I went to the alley and drank a forty ounce and got arrested and missed the show.

Chris: Shitty. They were great.

Fat Mike: I know—bummed!

Chris: Yeah.

Nardwuar: And they were from Winnipeg, right Chris?

CW: Well, half of them were from Calgary, but then they moved. Those two moved to Winnipeg.

Fat Mike: Marcus, I thought you knew your shit, dude. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Also The Neos as well. They're one of your favorites. Did you catch The Neos at all Fat Mike?

Fat Mike: No, I don't think they ever came down to California. I don't know if they ever actually played a live show.

Nardwuar: Yes, they did. Of course. They did come down to California. Actually, their very first tour to California was in a station wagon and NoMeansNo was the backup band.

Fat Mike: Wow.

Nardwuar: The Neos and NoMeansNo. And that kind of attracted Jello to



Nardwuar: So, Fat Mike Burkett. Now Mike, the last time I talked to you, I mentioned that there was an Idaho State Senator called Mike Burkett. There really was. Have you found anything more about this?

Fat Mike: No. I don't care.

Nardwuar: Isn't that amazing though? Mike Burkett. Your exact name is the name of an Idaho State senator from 1988 to 1992 and 2002 to 2004, all these years.

Fat Mike: Uh, not really that amazing.

NoMeansNo and then, well, maybe the rest is history. What about the other Canadian classic punk bands, aside from D.O.A.?

Fat Mike: What about some of the newer ones?

Nardwuar: That's what I was wondering. The Real Mackenzies.

Chris: Million Dollar Marxists from Ottawa. They're great.

Fat Mike: Are they?

Nardwuar: Don't mention them to Fat Mike because they're signed to GearHead!

Chris: Yeah, they are.

Fat Mike: This may be surprising, but I'm actually playing bass on the new Real Mackenzies album.

Chris: Oh yeah? Cool. I heard that they just got a new drummer. The guy from Good Riddance.

Fat Mike: That's true.

Chris: Wow. That's good.

Fat Mike: We're recording their record right now.

Nardwuar: So Chris, have we missed anyone else from all-time Canadian punk?

Fat Mike: Propagandhi are one of the most important punk bands ever.

Nardwuar: What do you think about Propagandhi, Chris Walter, having moved out of Winnipeg kind of after Propagandhi had got going?

Chris: Yeah, they got started getting going in the early '90s. About the time I left. They're a pretty serious band, pretty serious guys, but they seem very sincere and honest to me and they seem to live by their beliefs and stuff.

Fat Mike: They make the curve.

Chris: I almost thought they sounded like NOFX, strangely enough though, but not without the political lyrics and stuff.

Fat Mike: Right, they're a little more metal.

Nardwuar: Are they mad at you still Fat Mike?

Fat Mike: Mad at me?

Nardwuar: I thought Propagandhi were mad at you perhaps?

Fat Mike: No, no, no. It's just they were gonna be on the *Rock Against Bush* comp and we ended up not putting their song on. We all decided it was better off if it wasn't on. It's because they don't believe in the entire U.S. political system in the first place. We just thought it was kind of silly for them to be on the comp. What about Teenage Head?

Chris: Yeah they were great too, yeah.

Fat Mike: I dunno about great. [laughs]

Chris: They were one of the first bands I saw. They were killer.

Fat Mike: Y'know the first, the first punk band I ever saw was the Canadian Subhumans.

Chris: Yeah, they were great too.

Fat Mike: They opened up for X at the Whiskey.

Nardwuar: That is awesome. So punk was exposed to you via Canada then?

Fat Mike: Yeah.

Nardwuar: So the Subhumans were the first punks you ever saw?

Fat Mike: Unless you count Killing Joke.

Chris: No.

Nardwuar: Well, there's a connection because Killing Joke did have some live EP that was recorded in Toronto, so that's kind of Canadian. And Killing Joke have been live on the Nardwuar The Human Serviette radio show, but I'm kind of mad at you Fat Mike. You released the U.K. Subhumans a bit later on.

Fat Mike: Well, they're a much better band Marcus.

Chris: Hey, hey!

Nardwuar: No there, hey, yeah go get him Chris! Go get him Chris! Go get him!

Fat Mike: Come on. Fair is fair. The English Subhumans are a much better band.

Nardwuar: The Canadian Subhumans are much better than the U.K. Subhumans.

Fat Mike: That's an impossibility. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Chris, go get him! Chris, defend Marcus here. Chris defend Marcus.

Chris: I like both bands, actually. I really do. I like both Subhumans.

Nardwuar: Well, thanks so much Chris. Keep on rockin' in the free world and doot doola doot doo...

Fat Mike: See ya, Chris.

Nardwuar: Chris, doot doola doot doo...

Chris: Oh shit.

Nardwuar: Fat Mike, you're calling me Marcus, but a lot of people have been calling you Mike Burkett lately.

Fat Mike: Oh yeah.

Nardwuar: What is up with that? In *Punk Planet* they called you Mike Burkett.

Fat Mike: I guess they think it's outing me or something? Like I care if people know my name? [laughs]

Nardwuar: Like in the intro it was "Fat Mike" Burkett. You think they could have had it on a header, but it was just Mike Burkett. It made me really angry.

Fat Mike: It didn't make me angry at all.

Nardwuar: It's—well I know what it feels to be called the real name—like Marcus.



“We’ll be loaded and probably be making a large amount of errors and our clothes match.”

Fat Mike: Yeah.

Nardwuar: Fat Mike, what opportunities have arose since Punk Voter? For instance, were you not approached by Russell Simmons to do some sort of “We Are the World” thing?

Fat Mike: Yeah.

Nardwuar: That’s incredible. Russell Simmons. He’s the Def Jam dude, right?

Fat Mike: Yeah, but I declined.

Nardwuar: I know that’s kind of like an additional perk and it might be kind of embarrassing, but, still, Russell Simmons!

Fat Mike: I don’t even know what he does. What was cooler is the other day I was in New York and Jesse Jackson was sitting at a table next to me and I said, “Hi” to him and he knew who I was, so that was pretty cool.

Nardwuar: Oh that’s amazing! You got to get him to do some spoken word or something like that?

Fat Mike: Not really. He’s kind of dull.

Nardwuar: Were you thinking, “How did he know about Fat Mike?” Would it have been all the shows you did?

Fat Mike: Well, I did a lot of press about Punk Voter as well as Russell Simmons’s organization and all the grassroots organizations that were trying to help the Democrat party. There was a lot of press and Jesse Jackson’s in there. Him and his Rainbow Coalition, which is kind of a funny name for a Black organization. But, he knew who I was. I was very flattered.

Nardwuar: Could you play for the troops if you wanted to? Would they allow you to play for the troops because perhaps you’re not for the president.

Fat Mike: They allowed Al Franken and all he did was make fun of the president when he was out there.

Nardwuar: Have you thought about tryin’ to play for the troops at all?

Fat Mike: Oh, there’s no fuckin’ way I’m goin’ out there.

Nardwuar: But how about for the soldiers ‘cause they—I’m sure they would enjoy something. Isn’t that where it starts? Grassroots?

Fat Mike: I wouldn’t mind playing music for some of the soldiers who are against the war, who don’t want to be there and are bummed out, but there’s a lot of soldiers who do want to be there and they like shooting people and I don’t want to play for them.

Nardwuar: I asked you before Fat Mike, about your band outfits. Like where you got them, where you got them made, what do you base them on?

Fat Mike: I told you we got them in Hawaii!

Nardwuar: I know, but I still think you get them from other places because looking at the nice suits and stuff, I’m curious. Do you have a tailor putting it all together?

Fat Mike: No, we bought our blue tuxes in Koreatown in L.A.

Nardwuar: I want to think that you really worked hard to get this stuff. Like, where’d you get the guitars made?

Fat Mike: Look, we don’t work hard at anything and that’s why we’re successful.

Nardwuar: Wow. I guess Marcus should follow that advice.

Fat Mike: [laughs]

Nardwuar: Fat Mike, anything else you want to add to the people out there at all?

Fat Mike: Anything I want to add to them?

Nardwuar: Why should people care about Me First And The Gimmie Gimmies?

Fat Mike: Well, y’know, Me First And The Gimmie Gimmies, no one thinks we’re

great but it’s hard not to kinda like us.

Nardwuar: Ba-Boom!

Fat Mike: You don’t have to strive for greatness, Marcus. You just have to try to have a good time.

Nardwuar: Just out of curiosity, what made you think that I was a “Marcus?”

Fat Mike: That’s what I heard your name was.

Nardwuar: Like, couldn’t you have thought I was a “Ted” or something? Something a bit tougher?

Fat Mike: Well, I didn’t want to make something up. This guy Tom here told me your real name was Marcus, so that’s what I’m going with.

Nardwuar: Thanks so much Fat Mike and doot doola doot doo...

Fat Mike: God’s dead.

Nardwuar: Um, that might work...

Fat Mike: [laughs]

Nardwuar: But just for y’know continuity purposes, can we at least go doot doola doot doo...

Fat Mike: Yeah, boop.

Nardwuar: That didn’t quite work actually.

Fat Mike: It didn’t?!

Nardwuar: It didn’t quite work. Doot doola doot doo...

Fat Mike: Jew Jew.

Nardwuar: That is, I dunno, doot doola doot doo...

Fat Mike: What are we doing now?

Nardwuar: We’re just trying to end the interview I think.

Fat Mike: Oh.

Nardwuar: Doot doola doot doo...

Fat Mike: Doot doo.

To hear this interview go to
<http://www.nardwuar.com>



New Easy Way **TEACHES** GUITAR

IN ONE DAY TO YOUR SATISFACTION AT NO COST!

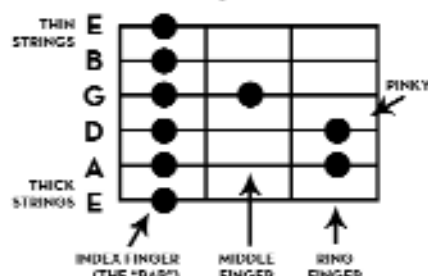


Punk songs are easy to play! Just get a (tuned) guitar and learn the two "power" bar chord shapes and then move them up and down the neck!

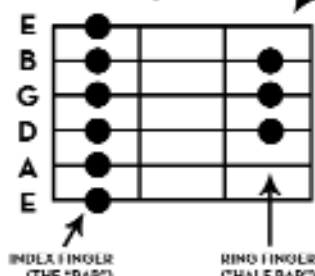
WHY WAIT? START TODAY!

For the "half bar" bend your ring finger backwards at the knuckle so that it frets only the B, G and D strings.

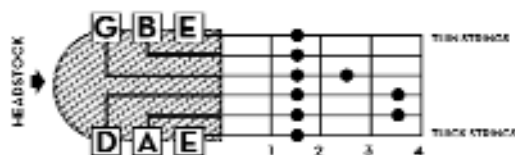
"E" SHAPE



"A" SHAPE



Now move your hand around (trying to retain the chord shape) so that the first finger is behind the various frets (if you play the shape before the first fret you don't need the bar and it's called an "open chord"). For example the "E" shape at the 2nd fret would look like this:

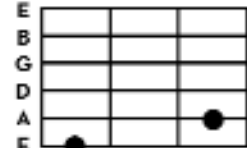


TIP! It's a little hard at first to make the bar, but in less than a week it gets easy!

If you can't push all your fingers down hard enough yet, just put your 1st and 3rd fingers two frets apart on the thickest ("low") strings for the "E" shape, and down one string each for the "A" shape, then only play the 2 strings you're fretting.

This way you can still play almost every punk rock song ever written!

SIMPLE "E" SHAPE



SIMPLE "A" SHAPE



NOW GO START A BAND



LOVE, NØRB

REV. NØRB

Now I'M supposed to get up in arms because a band that no one in their right mind should've given a fucking fuck and a half about for the last ten? twenty? years is playing at the casino?

SEEMINGLY TEN BILLION THINGS
MONUMENTALLY MORE PUNK THAN
POINTLESS MUSING ON THE
MORALITY OF SOCIAL DISTORTION
PLAYING THE CASINO

or

I DANCED WITH TOMOKO, THE
OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY ATE MY
COLUMN AND THE RIDDLER'S DEAD,
DON'T TELL ME YOUR FUCKING
TROUBLES

That's right! That's right! I, Rev. Nørb, danced with Tomoko! THEE Tomoko! The Supersnazz Tomoko! The Tweezers Tomoko! The "Letter to Tomoko" Tomoko! *This is not a hoax! Not an imaginary story! Not a tragic misspelling of the surname of right-handed pitcher Brett Tomko!* I danced with Tomoko, almost hit a moose, and got drunk with the Undertones! And, whilst Social Distortion were playing at Oneida Bingo & Casino, much to the chagrin of... uh... *somebody* or another, i, Rev. Nørb, was, *a pied*, in the capital of Canada (that's the country two spots up from Mexico), vainly attempting to write this very column from a standing-up position, and failing miserably, as the Ottawa public library's

computers routinely dissolved all that i had written every fifteen minutes. Bah! Fie upon the Ottawa Public Library's computer system! A pox upon it, even! However, i am virtually certain that Ottawa's slipshod public internet facilities are meant, by a just and righteous Divine Spirit (yeah, that's right, a "Divine Spirit." *My Great Spirit ate dog poop at the end of Pink Flamingos! Sorry about yours!*), to be some manner of karmic tradeoff to offset the almost indescribable numbers of really, really, really, *really*, *REALLY* hot girls Ottawa is packed to the metaphorical gills with. I mean, Ottawa is so inexplicably filled to the brim with trim (both Asian trim and the other kind) that they might as well change the name of the place HOT-awa! And they can take the two-letter postal abbreviation for "Ontario" and preface it with the letters H, A, R, D and a hyphen while they're up! I mean, hokey smokes! *Rant! Rave! Pant! Etc.!* But, yes, i'm getting ahead of myself. Actually, i don't really have a beginning or an end in mind for this column, so technically i can't be ahead, i can only be off on a side street or an on-ramp or something (and, speaking of on-ramps, and Canada, which we [well, i] were, do you know what the only part of Canada [as far as i can tell] is that doesn't have

bilingual road signs? That's right. Québec. *Seulement en Français!* And, of course, that's perfectly understandable: I mean, just because everywhere else in the country [as far as i can tell] can stick an "ARRET" under "STOP" and an "EST" underneath the "EAST" and a "SUD" underneath "SOUTH," why would that mean that Québec is obligated to return the favor? *Screw it, man! The national character is at stake!* Let's just have EST and OUEST and SUD and NORD, so what if there's tons of English speakers driving down these roads? *S.F.O.D., assholes!* Six-lane highway at 100 km an hour and we've got a lane closure up ahead? *Hey, the Anglophones will figure it out!* Sure, by the time they remember that "DROIT" means "right" and "FERMÉE" means "closed," they'll already be barreling into a construction zone, scattering unfortunate highway workers like tenpins, or ninepins, or whatever the fuck kinda pins they have there, but who cares? *We got our national pride to think of!* [i kind of think i entered the freeway up an exit ramp in Québec. I'm not sure. All i know is that i had to crank the car around at a *really* funky angle to merge with traffic, and they all seemed pretty darn surprised to see me. Oh well, so long as Québec's cultural integrity

photo by Chris Pretti



yes to the UNDERTONES...

...no to Social Distortion

was maintained, like, who cares?]) [further, you know what else is funny about Canada and Québec? Well, okay, you know how Canada will do things the opposite way they're done in the U.S., just to be different? Like, in America, Interstates 5 and 95 go up and down, 10-80-90 go east and west, right? Odd numbers = north/south; even numbers = east/west. Well, of course, in Canada, they've gotta do it the other way round, so 10-80-90 go up and down, 5 & 95 go east and west {route numbers used for illustration only}. *Mais naturellement*, Québec has got to do things the opposite way that the rest of Canada does things—so 5 & 95 are back to going up and down, 10-80-90 go *est* and *ouest*, just like the States. And, of course, since the U.S. has their Interstate route numbers displayed in blue-shield-with-red-top shapes, Canada has to vary from that—lest they be accused of tonguing the monied sphincter of the U.S. Imperialist juggernaut—so they put their route numbers inside the shape of the crown of the British monarchy {nicely done, Canada. We drink deeply of your fierce cultural independence}. But, of course, Québec can't do what the rest of Canada does, so *they* put their route numbers in blue shield shapes with red tops, *a la* the United States. Oh, you crazy kids!]). But, yes. Where was i? Oh, yes, i was off on vacation, tenting thru Canada, whilst Social Distortion were, apparently, offending someone, somewhere, by playing at the Casino. Quote me on this one: "*Oh no.*" I mean, *gosh*, *Social Distortion playing at the Casino! Whatever shall we do? Whither shall we go from here?* I was at a bar watching a band (the Groovie Ghoulies, quoted earlier), and this guy who i vaguely know by face but not at all by name (i think he started going to shows around the same time as the Rhythm Chicken [i.e., mid-'80s]) but

HOO HOO HOO!!! The guy becomes drunkenly indignant. *How dare i not condemn Social Distortion for him! After all, HE saw my old band Suburban Mutilation playing at Wally's Spot in 1985!* (ooh, you saw my old band's last show. Thanks for the lifetime of support!) **HE** *saw my band play at Wally's Spot in 1985, and now I'M betraying him too, by not enthusiastically validating his condemnation of Social Distortion for him! IS THERE NO JUSTICE IN THIS WORLD???* I'm like, look, douche-ass, i haven't seen you at a show in so long that i don't even remember your name anymore—if i even fuckin' knew it to begin with—which means that, when the fifty trillion GREAT bands who played Green Bay in the nineties played Green Bay in the nineties, *you* were likely off trying to figure out what manner of long sleeve t-shirt coordinated best with open-toed sandals, and, i'd be willing to wager, over the course of the last decade or so, the main basis of your "connection" to "the scene," such as it is, has been an annual pilgrimage to the fuckin' *Warped Tour*. And now **I'M** supposed to get up in arms because a band that no one in their right mind should've given a fucking fuck and a half about for the last *ten? fifteen? twenty?* years is playing at the casino? Like, somehow, in a turn of events most shocking and unexpected, Social Distortion are now big douchebags, and we need to rally in opposition to their newly heinous ways to keep the purity of the scene intact, else all is lost? Dude, Social Distortion are merely irrelevant: **YOU'RE THE FUCKING DOUCHEBAG, DOUCHEBAG!!!** I mean, it's not like this guy is some idealistic seventeen-year-old kid who just found out there's no Santa Claus (wait... that was a bad metaphor. I mean, people don't usually find out that there's no Santa Claus until their mid-twenties. But you

LEARN TO DEAL WITH IT AT SOME POINT IN TIME BEFORE YOU TURN THIRTY. Besides, i don't think Social Distortion playing under the big top in the Oneida Bingo & Casino parking lot is as much an indictment of the band as it is of the band's *fans*. I mean, the circus never parks its wagons where it's not wanted, ya know? Nobody would stick a band out there if they didn't think the band's *FANS* were going to come out there to see them, so, sirrah, i submit that it is **YOU**, the *FANS* of Social Distortion, that have corrupted our bloodlines, and allowed this taint of (eek!) impurity into the scene, by positioning yourself as A Fanbase Likely To Make The Band's Engagement At The Casino A Profitable One. It is **YOU** who are the ball lickers! **YOU** who are the schmucks! **YOU** who are the sellouts, and other pithy epithets! (for the record, the only act i've ever paid to see under the big top at the Casino was Little Richard. Who sucked. I mean, i'm fine with the fact that his bodyguard had to help him up onto his piano; there's no shame in getting old and brittle. I'm fine with the fact that the guy's continual "SHUT UP!" schtick is akin to something befitting assignment to one of the Sweathogs on *Welcome Back, Kotter*. What i'm NOT fine with is that the guy had TWO BASS PLAYERS—one wearing a doo-rag, for cripes sakes—and only played about five or six *bona fide* Little Richard songs. Everything else was token '50s nostalgia covers of a non-Little Richardly nature. I mean, *Fats Domino? Elvis Presley? JERRY LEE FRIGGIN' LEWIS, F'R CHRISSAKES???* Cover your shame, mon! [and, further yet, while i, like many, hold Little Richard to be a full 50% of the binary system of '50s Rock prime movers {Chuck Berry being the other}, the fact that *he*, today, sucks, whilst the Comets—pilloried for decades by Standard Rock

Look, douche-ass...

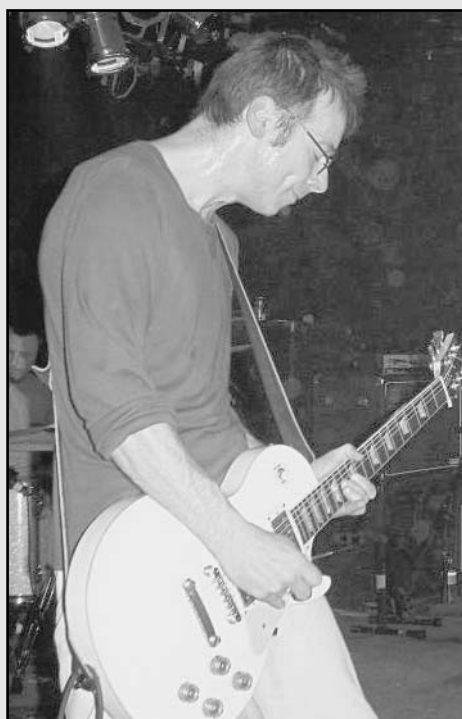
that i haven't seen in like ten years (and don't really remember liking anyway) comes up to me and will not shut up about the *GRAVE BETRAYAL* of Social Distortion playing at the Casino. I'm like *yeah, boy, you'd expect a band that signed a ten-album deal with CBS to play more basement shows. What hath God wrought?* I mean, *who the fuck cares?* When Social Distortion played Green Bay the first time (ca. 1990), they wouldn't go on stage because the promoter attempted to supply them with clean towels from his Mom's linen closet, and their contract *specifically* required the promoter to supply them with *BRAND NEW TOWELS*—thus an envoy had to be sent off to ShopKo™ to procure the necessary stock of virgin terrycloth before the band would deign to grace us with their presence. And, fifteen years later, they wind up playing in the big tent outside of the Casino. Not to put too fine a point on it, but *who fuckin' gives a fuck?* How does the 1990 dot of the band refusing to go on stage at Kutska's Hall 'til they got their new towels not logically and easily connect to the 2005 dot of the band playing at the Casino? *What is there that is hard to follow about this? What's out of character? Whither the outrage, jack?* But, yet, the guy keeps drunkenly moaning. *Three decades of punk rock maintaining a state of utter purity, and NOW, in 2005, Social Distortion have suddenly ruined everything for everyone! BOO HOO*

know what i mean), this guy is in his early-to-mid-thirties, and should have come to grips with the inevitability of this type of shit a decade ago. I mean, *Billy Idol* plays at the Casino, so, at one point in time, i, me, young Rev. Nørþ, engaged in my high-powered after-school job of ripping the fat and guts and residual feather shafts off of refrigerated chicken parts, had to come to grips with the fact that the guy who sang vocals on my *FAVORITE PUNK ALBUM OF ALL TIME*, Billy Idol, was now on the little radio that the chicken pluckers (as were we known) had stationed atop the water heater back by the sinks, singing an *AMAZINGLY LAME* and *TERRIFYINGLY POPULAR* song called "Hot in the City" that was, adding insult to injury, a blatant rip off of Nick Gilder's 1978 wimp-rock #1 hit, "Hot Child in the City," **BUT EVEN WORSE** (but you know what's good? "Backstreet Noise," the b-side of "Hot in the City." One could imagine the Fevers, Bobbyteens, or perhaps even the Epoxies totally raking with that one [but, for the record, that's the only good song Nick Gilder ever recorded] [*JUST REALIZED THIS RIGHT NOW DEPT.*: Both Nick Gilder and Generation X recorded for Chrysalis Records. Huh.]). **LOOK. THIS TYPE OF SHIT HAPPENS. BANDS YOU GREW UP IDOLIZING** (er...no pun intended) **WILL SUDDENLY MANIFEST AMAZING SQUARENESS AND BECOME INCREDIBLY POPULAR.**

Historians for being a bunch of paunchy old white squares from the Northeast—thus, by some critical measure, frauds—still **RULE** live, despite {because of?} an octogenarian lead guitarist, suggest that it is **LITTLE RICHARD** who is the fraud, or, at bare minimum, the ball licker]). *Uh...where was i going with this?* Oh, yes, Social Distortion playing at the Casino. Well, fuck it, i danced with Tomoko, which is relevant, because i danced with her at the selfsame casino that Social Distortion played at. And, in point of fact, *that* is relevant because that is where i've seen the Comets (numerous times) at. In point of fact, the *first* time i saw the Comets was at the first Rockabilly Fest at the casino, and the *last* time i saw the Comets was at the second Rockabilly Fest there, and the second Rockabilly Fest was what Tomoko was in town for, and both Rockabilly Fests were booked by this guy named Phil, who is also the guy who booked Social Distortion in the tent. Now, why that is largely relevant is because Tomoko, as well as dancing with me, also bought me a beer, which (oh, *horrors of horrors!*) required me to return a favor, which is where i found out the highly disturbing fact that *Tomoko drinks Miller Lite™!!!* Eek. Now, *that* is relevant because once, within *Razorcake's* hallowed pages, Rhythm Chicken claimed—correctly—that Miller Lite™ was unfit to even clean a German toilet with. This, of

course, is relevant not only because Rhythm Chicken was mentioned earlier as a guy who, local-scene-wise, was a peer, i think, of the douchebag who was moaning endlessly about Social Distortion playing at the casino, but because, during the Toronto leg of my just-concluded Canadian vacation, i stumbled out of the Rogers Centre (after witnessing the Toronto Blue Jays dispatch the despised Minnesota Twins 4-0), only to be greeted by the shockingly unmistakable sounds of some loose cannon playing drums *al fresco*. There i am, making my way from the premises in the midst of a throng of dispersing Canucks, and i hear **THUDDA WAPPA THUDDA WAPPA THUDDA WAPPA THUD! THUD! THUD! THUDDA WAPPA THUD THUD! THUDDA WAPPA THUD THUD THUD!!!** I can't tell exactly where the noise is coming from, but i *can* tell that it is someone playing drums in the open air, outside the stadium. *Oh my fucking gawd. It CAN'T be!* The drumbeats continue. **THUDDA WAPPA THUDDA WAPPA THUDDA WAPPA THUD! THUD! THUD! THUD!** They play a recognizable beat for about ten or twenty seconds, stop, spend a few seconds pissing around with some faux-stadium fills, then lunge back into a completely different drumbeat. *My god. It HAS to be.* In a ten-gazillion-to-one coincidence, my brief jaunt to Toronto for a Blue Jays game has coincided with a Rhythm Chicken tour stop. It HAS to be. I start running around the exterior of the Rogers Centre, looking for the Rhythm Chicken. *This is gonna be the best thing EVER!* I figure i will just come running out of the crowd and tackle him, which will shock both the crowd and the Chicken himself—then we can roll around, feign combat, and stoke the crowd to a fever pitch (no Red Sox movie pun intended). *Surely this will be the jest of all jests!* I round the corner, and find the source of the mysterious ruckus. Shockingly, it is NOT the Rhythm Chicken. Planet Earth, please be seated—i have some rather, uh, *intense* news you'd best not absorb whilst standing: *In the parallel universe that is Canada, there exists A SECOND RHYTHM CHICKEN. AND HE IS BLACK.* Let that tidbit sink in for a while. Roll it around on the back of thy tongue, 'til the flavor dissolves fully: **THERE IS A BLACK RHYTHM CHICKEN. AND HE LIVES IN CANADA.** I mean, no, the guy didn't have a majestic chicken head, as is traditionally found upon domestic Rhythm Chickens. And, when the Black Rhythm Chicken ("BRC" to you and me [alternately the "Soul Chicken"]) paused in his mighty arena rock ruckus, he didn't point his Rhythm Logs skyward—instead, he would stand upright, holler some incomprehensible shit (presumably about the Blue Jays), then retake his seat and resume dispensing ruckus in the time honored fashion of the North American Rhythm Chickens Union. *And why is this relevant?* This is relevant because i don't know what i am officially supposed to call Canadian black people. *African North Americans? Afro-Canadians?* However, i *do* know that Canadian Native Americans are called "First Nation" (perhaps, "First Nationals?" Was Mike Nesmith aware of this?), although i'd cast my ballot for "Canindians" if i were allowed to vote, which i am not. And *this* is relevant because all Canadians—First Nationals, Second Nationals, and zee Quebecois—use a quarter with a moose on the b-side, and i almost *hit* a fucking moose during my trip. Naturally, i

brought it on myself: I saw all these "MOOSE CROSSING" signs, and started to think *god dammit, you know, i'm really going to be disappointed if i don't see a moose now. Of course, i would just as soon see it in a retreating posture, returning to the woods, but i suppose i'll take what i can get.* Not surprisingly, about ten minutes later, here's this fucking moose—kind of like a horse, but about 33% bigger—galloping out of the woods at me. Now, if you're familiar with the street-crossing patterns of deer, you are aware of the fact that—unpredictable pauses notwithstanding—they cross roads in a perfectly



**not implicated
in pull quotes**

straight line. They walk from one curb to another as if following a crosswalk visible only to woodland creatures. Moose follow no such laws of transit. They start at one side of the road, then bolt at a 45-degree angle **DIRECTLY AT YOUR CAR.** They are also very large. Very, very large. Please take me at my word for this: Near-moose encounters can be effectively qualified as "something other than pleasant." Of course, i didn't actually encounter the moose in Canada. I encountered it in New Hampshire. This is relevant because i was on my way to Maine. *That* is relevant because i decided to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of the Boris The Sprinkler/Mr. T Experience/Riverdales Summer 1995 Tour by driving from Montréal to Maine, because, during that tour, i was across a not-large river from Maine and failed to realize it, therefore never actually went into Maine, therefore had never technically been to Maine, thus i felt compelled to rectify that whilst in the neighborhood. That was a bad idea. A bad, *bad* idea. See, i had also never been to Vermont before either—thus, i thought, i would dip back down from Québec to the US just deeply enough to follow the little squiggly lines on the map into Vermont, across New Hampshire, and over the Maine border,

then back again. A simple jaunt, in theory—unfortunately, i forgot to take into account the fact that the squiggleness of the lines was due to the fact that **SOME JACKASS PUT A BUNCH OF FREAK-ASS MOUNTAINS IN THE WAY.** So, yeah. Here i am, like any budding brain surgeon, driving in pitch darkness and fog and mist and eighteen other fucking negative conditions thru the ludicrously jackknifing back roads of Vermont—**THEE motherfucking CREEPIEST STATE IN THE UNION, BAR NONE.** Vermont is so fucking fucked up and spooky looking at night that one expects to see a gingerbread house with a smiling and drooling Steven King sitting on the front porch and a mounted Nazgul guy clopping up the driveway around every corner. This horror of impending creepitude is broken only by the sudden rush of truckers—presumably Nazgul as well, and outfitted with grotesquely adorned black mesh trucker caps—blasting over hills, hell-bent for leather, going about 200 mph on crazy roads no sane soul would feel comfortable doing thirty-five on. When i looked at the atlas before commencing this particular leg of the journey, i estimated that traveling from Vermont to Maine would take me about one hour, round trip. It actually took more like three or four, every fucking second white-knuckled and horrible. In New Hampshire, i discovered the pleasures of Dixville Notch ("1.5 miles of steep and winding road"—now *there's* the fucking understatement of the century), as well as the added sensual dimensions that a moose attack can bring to one's love life. *Narrow roads, high cliffs, zero visibility. What's not to like?* At long last, i pass Lake Umbagog or Lake Uggamabob or Lake Ungubmagob or some other hideous, nameless thing that was likely hideous and nameless and ancient when our world was young, and, in the midst of an otherwise distinguished woods, i come upon a small, blue road sign reading "MAINE STATE LINE." I pull my car just short of the sign, and, barefoot, exit my vehicle. If this were i cartoon, i would now suddenly get flattened by a speeding express train that would appear out of nowhere, literally inches from my goal. Instead, i step across the imaginary line separating NH from ME, and do a little tap dance to the line "*Hello, my honey, hello my sweetie*" from that song that Michigan J. Frog sings in Warner Brothers' renowned "One Froggy Evening" cartoon, and get back in my car. After a second's pause, i decide that this is roundly unsatisfying, so i get back out and tap dance to the next line—"*Hello my ragtime gaaal!*"—then get back in my car for keeps, and head back for my tent in Ontario. And why *this* is relevant is because, when Boris played in New Hampshire, we played with the Riverdales and Mr. T Experience, and stayed at Joe Queer's house—and the Queers and Riverdales and Mr. T Experience were all on Lookout!, as were the Smugglers, who were from Canada, which was where i was vacationing, and Tomoko recognized me from my once judging a Smugglers' Dance Contest™. And *this* is relevant because Kid Spike saw me too, and, according to Tomoko, Supersnazz vocalist Kid Spike "loves" me. **ME! ME! ME REV. NØRB! KID SPIKE LOVES ME!** Kid Spike is also the same *age* as me (said age now approaching "none of your god damn business" proportions)! I, very conveniently, also love Kid Spike. I almost mention to Tomoko that i had Kid Spike

rated Top Ten in my "Top 50 Hottest Chicks of Rock" column, but quickly and wisely decide not to mention this, given the fact that Tomoko not being rated as highly as Kid Spike would almost certainly result in widespread character assassination flung my way (i mean, putting up with a lifetime of Dirt Bike Jeanie trying to put her metaphorical foot up my metaphorical ass for ranking her a comparatively paltry #41 is *more* than enough negative fallout for one dweebly scribe, thanks [but, come on, how high did *Blender* rank ya, woman? Besides, that was Wes Unseld's number! Actually, Wes Unseld was a fat tub of crap. But it is Dirk Nowitski's number! So, i mean, come *on!* A little gratitude here!]) However, Kid Spike is also married now, which

who, as we passed the exit for Nodine, MN, sang "*Nodine... aw honey is that you?*" to the tune of Chuck Berry's "Nadine," which i thought was excellent work on his part), and the Bobbettes wore—you guessed it—red dresses (please see the latest edition of the "Norton News" email newsletter if you demand to have my claims of the Bobbettes' greatness that night corroborated). I dunno about you, but i could stand around listening to, what, sixty-year-old black ladies in red dresses singing four-part vocal harmonies and doing goofy little synchronized dance movements for... well... a darn long time, frankly. And how *this* is relevant is an enigma. And how *that* is relevant is that the Riddler's real name was "Edward Nigma" (actually, i think

Lennon is facing off the album cover (THEORETICAL HIGH TRUTH OF GRAPHIC DESIGN: No one should ever be facing off a page. Everyone should be depicted facing into the center of the page. It's, like, a rule. You now owe me one quarter's tuition), and, besides, although everyone should be pictured on the front of their album cover, NO ONE should be depicted on their band's t-shirts. And, of course, the PACK logo is that cool magenta scrawl, which looks pretty damn sweet across a black background. And, of course, the Busy Signals were pretty cool when they opened for the Undertones, and played a cover of Protex's "Don't Ring Me Up," which was relevant because that Protex 45 was on the same label,

LOOK. THIS TYPE OF SHIT HAPPENS. BANDS YOU GREW UP IDOLIZING WILL SUDDENLY MANIFEST AMAZING SQUARENESS AND BECOME INCREDIBLY POPULAR. LEARN TO DEAL WITH IT AT SOME POINT IN TIME BEFORE YOU TURN THIRTY.

tends to throw a damper on my wild ardor. But, i mean, *still*—it's the principle of the thing. *Kid Spike and me, sittin' in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G!* "*Spike will have her antennae out now,*" says Tomoko, "*she will know I am having fun with Nørb.*" The fact that Tomoko actually knows the English word for "antennae" is almost as brain-boggling as the fact that Kid Spike digs me! And *this* is relevant because i *really dig* antennae! And *that* is relevant because the word "antennae" was uttered at the Rockabilly Fest, which was at the casino, which was where Social Distortion were playing, which is what i didn't go see because i was on vacation to Canada, which is where they have a red maple leaf on their flag, which is relevant because the best album i've heard in a while is that A-Lines album on Sympathy (but can *somebody PLEASE* get me the lyrics to "Four"? What the hell are they saying? "*If I get four more boyfriends I'll get it done?*" What the fuck does THAT mean? And can i watch? Lick the bowl? Etc.?), and, on the cover, all the A-Lines are depicted wearing red dresses, the same color as the maple leaf on Canada's flag, which is relevant because the best act at the second Rockabilly Fest, the one i danced with Tomoko at, was the Bobbettes, best known for their 1957 smasheroo "Mr. Lee" (you know... "one, two, three... look at Mr. Lee! Three, four five... look at him jive!"), which is relevant not only because "Mr. Lee" was a favorite in-van Boris pun when we passed Albert Lea, Minnesota (i mean... if you've ever been in a band and traveled together in a van for an extended period of time, you realize that you will go thru certain periods where the band will be bored off their ass, looking out the windows, attempting to create the best/worst rock'n'roll pun from that which presents itself to them as a sort of geekly competition. On Boris' West Coast Tour of 1997, my magnum opus was "*One, Two, Three... look at Albert Lea*" as we passed the Albert Lea exit, which was deftly countered by bassist Ric Six,

they later made up some cockamamie story where "Edward Nigma" turned out *not* to be the Riddler's real name. Needless to say, fuck that), and Frank Gorshin, *THE ONE, TRUE RIDDLER* (apart from myself), is *DEAD!* I mean, the Joker is obviously the best Batman villain (actually, probably the best comic book villain ever), but the Riddler was always my favorite, just because he had a cool green and purple suit covered in question marks. And Gorshin, of course, was *thee* Riddler. The Riddler against whom all other Riddlers shall be judged! He certainly kicked ass on Jim Carrey's toadying retard Riddler in the third Batman movie, and, as for John Astin's embarrassing shot at Riddlerism... well... let's let the fact that Astin's performance as The Riddler was so bad it actually drew Gorshin out of retirement stand as testament to his attempt's general lack of worth. I can only hope that the guy from the "Let This Be Your Last Battlefield" episode of *Star Trek* who was half-white and half-black in stark opposition to Gorshin's half-black and half-white character died at the exact same time as Frank, in order that the grand cosmic balance be maintained. And how *this* is relevant is, well, perhaps, if i were Frank Gorshin, as Tim Stegall claims i am, and, by implication, the Riddler as well, then i would almost certainly say *Riddle me this: What's more punk, Mickey Bradley of the Undertones' Beatles Let It Be t-shirt, or the lead singer of The Busy Signals' home-made PACK button?* And, of course, this would lead to great speculation: I've been listening to the Undertones since i was fifteen (in point of fact, as i told the band after their performance at Chicago's Bottom Lounge, their first album is the album i most closely associate with being fifteen) (and let's thank fucking Jah above that i'm old enough that the album i associate most acutely with being fifteen isn't by Fifteen!), but that PACK album is a lot cooler than the Beatles *Let It Be* album, and the *Let It Be* album cover isn't even particularly well-designed, since John

Good Vibrations, as the Undertones first record was (and, of course, both "Busy Signals" and "Don't Ring Me Up" imply telephones, which is kinda funny because no one really gets busy signals any more, because people either have call waiting, or voicemail, or some goddamn thing, but, yet, in punkdom, the busy signal is now at its highest popularity [e.g. both Boris The Sprinkler and the Exploding Hearts having songs called "Busy Signals," the band called Busy Signals, etc., etc., etc.]), not to mention the fact that the singer of the Busy Signals is WAAAAAY hotter than Mickey Bradley, so, i mean, heck, a tough call, right? And, how *this* is relevant is that **I COULD VERY LITERALLY GO ON ALL FUCKING NIGHT RATTLING OFF VAGUELY INTERCONNECTED OBSERVATIONS INVOLVING THE UNDERTONES AND THE BUSY SIGNALS AND THE BLACK RHYTHM CHICKEN AND THE WHITE RHYTHM CHICKEN AND SUPERSNAZZ AND THE BOBBETTES AND THE COMETS AND THE AND THE BEATLES AND THE PACK AND THE GROOVIE GHOULIES AND BORIS AND THE RIVERDALES AND THE MTX AND THE QUEERS AND MY TRIP TO CANADA AND FRANK GORSHIN AND THE A-LINES AND PROTEX AND THE SMUGGLERS** and as fucking stupid and pointless as they might be, they would all be inherently more worthy of scholarly contemplation than the perceived sins of Social Distortion, a band who, to me, can do no sin because i could not possibly care less about them. That said, if the Inner Gorshin in you is just dying to know what's punker, Mickey Bradley's Let It Be t-shirt or the singer for the Busy Signals' "PACK" button, the singer for the Busy Signals had a boyfriend, so it's Mickey Bradley's Beatles t-shirt all the way!

Love,
Nørb



KIND OF A SEWER

JOSH LANE

"I guess I'm gonna go look for some sticks to poke people with."

WE ATE SAND.

I felt somebody's foot nudging my ribs, trying to wake me up, but I wasn't giving in just yet. It was one of those mornings where you just don't want to open your eyes, not because you were too hung over or didn't want face the indiscretions of the previous night, but because you just didn't want to admit to yourself that you, in fact, really did sleep next to that puddle of dog vomit, that that smell was indeed an ashtray that someone had inadvertently knocked over while you were asleep. During those first few moments before full consciousness, you can convince yourself that you're at home in your cozy bed and you can get up to go to the bathroom whenever you want without stepping in anything, and no promise of coffee or breakfast or warm sunlight can pry that away from you.

Still, I could sense the person's restlessness, and no matter how tempting ignorance can be sometimes, I didn't want to spend part of a vacation hoping I don't accidentally inhale one of the many cigarette butts spread out next to my face.

Mindful of the various spills near where I had slept, I crawled out of my sleeping bag and looked at Jay, the person who had poked me in the rib, and asked, "Where's everybody else, Jay?"

He gave a drowsy shrug and said, "They're all still asleep."

I scanned the room for my travel companions and found them all with bedding conditions similar to mine. "Jeez. It looks like everybody just slept where they fell," I said.

"Yeah, we gotta get out of here," Jay replied. "I'm starving."

I agreed, as I wasn't too jazzed on sitting in Jay's living room, which smelled about as pleasant as one might expect from such surroundings. "How hard do you think it's going to be to get all these fuckers up and out of here?"

Jay shrugged again. "Last night got pretty out of hand."

Snippets of the previous night flashed through my head. I had finally retired at about 4AM during the second viewing of *Time Bandits* and vaguely recalled war whoops and drunken wrestling match proposals while I was asleep. I glanced around the room again and asked, "How many of them are even wearing pants?"

This didn't elicit a shrug from Jay. This he knew. "Not too damn many."

"So we're probably looking at a late lunch instead of breakfast, huh?"

Jay nodded his response and there were a

few moments where we looked at the ground and thought about our next course of action. After a few minutes, we both stood up and Jay said, "First I'm gonna put on a pot of coffee, and then I guess I'm gonna go look for some sticks to poke people with."

The next several hours were a frustrating search for pants, socks, wallets, and anything else a person could possibly lose during *Time Bandits*-inspired war whoops and wrestling matches. Several of us, myself included, had trouble getting both shoes on before we needed a smoke break. Soon the front yard was full of people in various stages of undress, slowly piecing together what had just happened and coming to terms with the fact they would never see that sock or retainer or shoelace ever again.

With his second cup of coffee, Tommy, surely the voice of reason among us, snapped out of it. "Buffet," he yelled, slapping his thigh for added affect.

This, however, was not a rare occurrence with Tommy and no one paid any attention except me. "What?"

"Jay was talking about a fried chicken buffet last night and I want to go there," he said, and then, just to reiterate, "Buffet!"

Jay looked doubtful. "People have been making noise about a burrito run. I don't know how easily they're gonna be swayed from that."

Tommy's face wrinkled up like it always did when he got mad. "You know what? Fuck burritos." He repeated himself loudly to get everybody's attention. "That's all we ever eat. We ate burritos all through Texas, we ate burritos when we went across the border, we ate burritos when we got back, and we ate fucking burritos last night before we went to Jay's house. We're finally in a town where we can kick back and eat a fucking meal and you guys want the same fast food shit we've been eating all week. Hey, I've got a better idea! Why don't we just eat some ramen like we do when we're at home?"

"But burritos are delicious," offered Matt, who didn't know Tommy well enough to know that there would be no disputing his logic.

Tommy just shook his head and said, "Fuck your burrito, Matt. Fuck your burrito," as he lit a smoke and walked back into the house, like the Lorax, finally losing faith in the ways of the people around him. I followed him.

"Wait," I said, "I want fried chicken, too."

With a serious, workmanlike look on his face, he nodded and said, "Let's do this."

Once we got in the van, I took stock of who else was coming. There was Tommy, Jay, Jay's roommate Eric, Bill the all-time driver, and Heather, the lone female in our caravan out to California and the only other person who hadn't felt the need to watch *Time Bandits* twice in a row. "So wait a minute. How many went with Matt to get burritos?"

Jay shook his head. "Too damn many."

"What's wrong with people?" Tommy asked. "It's like just eating a bowl of vanilla whenever you want some ice cream. There's nothing wrong with it, vanilla ice cream's good, and hell, you can't go wrong with ice cream."

"That's not entirely true," Eric said. "I'm not a fan of butterscotch ice cream. Never have been."

"Let's not get into semantics. What I'm saying is vanilla ice cream is fine, but every once in a while wouldn't you like some marshmallows or some cookies on that shit? Wouldn't you like to try one of the other thirty flavors?"

"Are we going to get ice cream or chicken?" Bill asked.

"Chicken," Tommy said. "The ice cream's just a metaphor."

"Oh," Bill said. "Can we get ice cream later?"

Tommy was getting a little flustered. "Whatever, you're getting me off track here. Listen, I love burritos as much as the next guy, probably a whole fucking lot more than the next guy. I might as well change my name to Joe Burrito I love 'em so much, but you have to draw the line somewhere. Remember New Orleans?" We remembered. "Who looks for a burrito stand in New Orleans? Surrounded by cheap Cajun food and the motherfucker wants Taco Bell."

Realizing that Tommy's rants could and often did go on all day, Heather wisely interrupted. "So Jay, what's the deal with this chicken buffet?"

"Yeah, is it Popeye's?" Bill asked.

"Popeye's doesn't have buffets," Heather said.

"They do, too, they're just uncommon," Bill retorted. "I think it's only like one in ten Popeye's franchises has a buffet and the rest are just take-out places."

"Yeah, I've been to one," I said. "They don't put out fries..."

"But if you ask for 'em, they'll make 'em fresh and give you your own basket!" Bill interjected. Bill didn't get excited about a many things, but french fries really did the trick.

**WE LAUGHED IN THE
FACES OF THESE
PHILISTINES,
UNBUCKLING OUR
BELTS AND
HIGH-FIVING
EACH OTHER
ENTHUSIASTICALLY
ALL THE WAY.**



Illustration by Mitch Clem • www.nothingnice.com

"Nah, it's not a Popeye's," Jay said, bringing the conversation back to earth. "It's like a Homestyle Buffet, but it's mostly just chicken and vegetables."

"No salad bar or dessert bar?"

"That stuff's pretty bare-bones," Jay said. "It's a pretty white-bread restaurant. It's the best chicken I've ever eaten, though. A bit pricey, but it's worth it."

Bill scoffed. "Popeye's is like six bucks. Is this place better than Popeye's?"

Jay laughed. "Dude, this makes Popeye's taste like warmed-over Chicken McNuggets."

We pulled into the parking lot and confirmed Jay's assessment: it was a pretty white-bread restaurant. Families piled in and out of sensible cars, seemingly straight from church. It was odd to see so many people wearing such meticulously nice clothes going to a restaurant that specialized in such messy food. Tommy was the first to bring up this point.

"I know it's not like they're going to a rib shack or anything, but jeez, fried chicken... you have to eat it with your hands if you want to get all the meat off it. Otherwise it's not worth it," he said.

Bill, nodding in agreement, said, "And these are the people that probably beat their kids for having bad table manners."

"Exactly. Fried chicken is totally a roll-up-your-sleeves, elbows-on-the-table, lick-the-

grease-off-your-fingers food. Why can't people go home and change clothes before they go eat? They're obviously not in a hurry since they had time to take the Oldsmobile through the automated car wash. Why not swing by the house and throw on an old T-shirt and some sweatpants?"

"Well, they probably don't want to look like us," Jay said. "Are we going to sit in the van all day and talk shit about these squares or are we going to eat?"

As soon as he looked at the menu, Tommy got the same wrinkled-up look on his face that he got when someone suggested burritos. "Thirteen bucks?"

Jay nodded. "I told you that on the way here. It's a bit pricey but it's worth it. That's exactly what I said."

"Yeah, but I thought you meant, like, eight bucks pricey. I thought we were talking about 'more expensive than a hamburger but people like us can still afford to eat here' pricey," Tommy said.

This got the same shrug from Jay that I had gotten when I first woke up. "Well, you're the one that wanted fried chicken. Fried chicken's not cheap." Bill once again pointed out that Popeye's was like six bucks but Jay ignored him. "If you want to go somewhere else, we'll go somewhere else, but if I don't get something to eat in the next fifteen minutes, I'm going to be really pissed off. I already spent an

hour this morning looking for your shoelace even though we could have walked down to a damn drugstore and bought another pair of shoelaces for a quarter."

This made Tommy stop and think for a minute. He scratched his chin and said, "No. You know what? I'm staying. I'm gonna pay that thirteen bucks for the buffet just like everybody else here. And you know what else? I'm gonna get my money's worth."

I, along with probably everybody else at the table, sensed another rant. Tommy's fourth in the little bit less than three hours that he had been awake. "Let's not to turn this into some class war thing, Tommy, let's just eat some food," Heather said.

"Fuck class war," he said, shaking his head. "This isn't about bourgeois or the ruling class or the government or anything like that. Look around. This place is packed, *packed to the fucking brim*, with nice, polite, starched-collar people that bring their kids and grannies and whoever else out to lunch on Sundays and they plunk down thirteen bucks a head without even thinking twice. How many of them even eat five dollars' worth of food? They get a nice little salad and scarf down some complimentary bread and butter, then they pick at a thigh with their forks and announce that they're stuffed. This place is making fucking *bank*, and none of these people realize that they're getting ripped off."

"And that's not class-related?" I said.

"Oh, I'm sure it's got something to do with class," he said. "I'm sure it's not an accident that this place was built in the middle of a suburban housing tract, miles away from any 'undesirable' minorities, but that's not what I'm talking about. This buffet... I'm taking it back. For everybody that's ever stayed away from here because it was too expensive and for everybody that's too stupid to see their own wastefulness, I'm gonna get my money's worth even if I have to go outside and make myself throw up to do it."

At that moment, I realized that one of Tommy's rants was actually making sense to me. It sort of confused me at first, because I couldn't believe that I agreed with him, but as I looked around the table, I realized that everyone else at the table agreed with him. And thus the gauntlet was thrown. There would be no chicken tender baskets or hot wing samplers for us that day; no, the thirteen-dollar fried chicken buffet would be the only way we would be able to look Tommy in the face without turning away in shame.

The staff had no idea what they were in for.

I had never eaten at a buffet with any of my five companions, but it's important to note that exactly half of our dining party (Jay, Bill, and Tommy) were pretty beefy guys who looked like they practically lived by the mantra of "All You Can Eat" and might have even developed strategies for times like these. The other half of us were of pretty average build but with deceptively large appetites; I had seen Eric and Heather wolf down enough burritos over the past week to know that they could put a dent in this place.

When we all sat back down after our first round at the Sneezeguard, Tommy began to chastise Eric for foolishly piling too much on his plate. "You never sprint at the beginning of a marathon," he said, like some fat Midwestern Confucius, "and you never pile your first plate high with food."

Eric laughed it off. "What the hell do you know about marathons? Did you see one on TV?"

"I'm not joking," Tommy said. "This is serious business. You have to get into a rhythm, pace yourself."

"Otherwise the terrorists win, Eric," Heather said. "Do you want the terrorists to win?"

Tommy shook his head disapprovingly. "Joke all you guys want, you'll be holding your bellies and begging for mercy after two plates."

Eric started to respond but Tommy said, "Talking time's over. Let's go to town." And so it began.

We started off slowly, sampling the selection of vegetables, dipping our toes in their culinary lake. From then on, it was not-fucking-around taken to the highest level: plate after plate of drumsticks dipped in mashed potatoes, fresh biscuits soaking in gravy, butter on everything. The staff was completely unprepared for such an onslaught, and had to send two waitresses to clear off all of our dirty plates and refill our water glasses. The first hour and a half was a frenzy the likes of which I have never seen equaled, before or since. We practically *drank* the chicken off the bone, and we could hear the kitchen staff cursing us for coming in that day.

But then the roof caved in. Eric began to

slow down and push himself back from the table a bit. "I never thought I'd say this, Tommy, but I should have listened to your advice," he said. "I'm running out of gas."

Tommy set his half-devoured chicken breast down, wiped his mouth, and cleared his throat, while Eric braced himself for a tongue-lashing. "You had a good run, Eric. Let me just ask you one question: was it worth thirteen dollars?" Eric's smile was the only response necessary.

"Here's the keys," Bill said, "in case maybe you want to go somewhere for a while."

Eric took the keys and said, "Nah, I think I'm just gonna take a nap. That took a lot out of me," and he began the deliberate, labored walk out to the van.

Soon after, Heather decided to make the same trip. "There's really only so much enjoyment I can get out of this," she said. "There's a point where I can't even taste the food anymore."

"I understand," said Tommy. "It stops being fun and it starts being... I don't know, exercise or something. You gave it a gallant effort, though, Heather. I'm proud to know you."

It was at this point that we had pretty much worn out our welcome, but this would only have posed a problem to the weakest of men. When they stopped picking up our dirty plates, we set them on the floor. When they stopped refilling our water glasses, we refilled them in the bathroom sink. When a man at a neighboring table remarked, "Looks like you guys are starting to take root," Jay responded with, "*Dawson's Creek* called. They want their sweater vest back," which would have pissed the guy off if it hadn't been muffled by a mouthful of food. We laughed in the faces of these Philistines, unbuckling our belts and high-fiving each other enthusiastically all the way.

Suddenly Tommy dropped his chicken and stood up. "Gentlemen, I think I'm finished eating my lunch."

We were stunned. He had been so steady, such a beacon of inspiration for the rest of us just when we thought we couldn't eat another bite. "No, dude, no. You can't throw in the towel now, not when we've come this far," Bill said, tugging on Tommy's shirt.

"No, lunch is over for me," he replied, then he smiled wide. "When I get back from the bathroom, I'm gonna start on dinner."

Around 8:30, the dirty looks that we had been getting since about two in the afternoon turned downright hostile, and we

knew that closing time was fast approaching. "That's cool," Tommy said. "They can take off whenever they want. I'll help 'em open this motherfucker tomorrow morning." But in reality, we all knew it would have to end soon. We had all worked shitty restaurant jobs and we all knew how annoying it was to have customers hanging out while you were just trying to clean up and get the hell out of there.

After ten minutes or so, one of the busboys walked over to our table, which was by that time the only one in the restaurant that didn't have its chairs stacked on top of it. "Listen, could you guys finish it up here? We'd really like to go home soon."

"Sign says 'All You Can Eat.' We're still eating," Jay said.

The busboy sighed. "I know what the sign says. The guys in the kitchen said they'd cook you whatever you want to take with you, but you have to promise to leave."

Jay was about to take him up on that offer, but Tommy stopped him. "I think we're just about done here, thanks. The service was excellent, by the way," he said. The busboy rolled his eyes.

We settled the check and walked out the front door, sort of half-leaning on each other for support, bellies swollen but heads held high, when all of a sudden Tommy grabbed onto my shoulder and puked in the shrubs. We all looked at each other and laughed.

He finally made good on his threat.

—Josh Lane



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SQUEEZE MY HORN

GARY HORNBERGER

If political humor is the motivation for comics, this paper has hog tied it and won the blue ribbon at the state fair.

Nine Innings of Verbal Assault



Baseball season has begun, and besides being just a game, the sport is a study in human behavior and a total lack of social graces. I have been to several games and every one has been amazing. Far more "boo"s for petty crimes than the majors. I've only been to Dodger games, so this might be biased, but can it be that one stadium houses all the lunatics? I find that hard to believe. This sort of crazy goes beyond painting faces, no shirts in freezing weather, or wearing silly costumes. No, this is the sort of embarrassment that gets one banned from ballparks.

It started with opening day. As we rolled up to pay for parking, we noticed that some nut has made his \$40,000 car into an anti-Giants billboard complete with a huge Dodger flag flying high above the trunk. Funny, right? Well, it gets better. Not twenty seconds later, we pull up next to a car with an inflatable doll in the likeness of Barry Bonds wearing an "I'm a Cheater" shirt poking out the sunroof. Now I realize that this is funny to a Dodger fan, but what does that look like to someone driving down the 5 or the 101 freeways? More fun is waiting inside.

If one does decide to wear the opponents' colors inside the stadium, they had best be pre-

pared to be tarred and feathered with peanuts and soda, and if they do let you find a seat, it will be a verbal assault for nine innings. Of course, don't restrict the peanut throwing to just the men; the woman and children are fully encouraged to join in. It seems the fans willing to resist only if you are really old.

Back to opening day. Once the game has begun and the catcalls for the opposing lineup are over, the real fun starts. We are all familiar with the beach ball at sporting events, but now the fans are getting creative. It seems that one can make an inflatable facsimile of a Balco steroid bottle and tap it around in the stands. I wonder if they will do the same for Giambi when he comes to town?

As mild as these events are, let me now describe some of the colorful characters that have shared the sections in which we have sat this season. First is the obsessed beach ball fan. This guy wants one worse than my dog wants a tennis ball. He was sitting in front of us, high in the outfield seats, when all of the sudden he spotted a beach ball. He leapt to his feet and yelled, "BEACH BALL!" for the whole park to hear, and the whole while, his entire body was shaking like a wet dog. I tried not to make eye contact with him.

Next on the list are the nuts at Dodger Photo Day, or as my friend Ricky likes to call it, Dodger Petting Zoo Day, because there is a three foot high plastic fence and a line of string to keep us creepy folks away from the players as they walk down one of three aisles made in the outfield. It is sort of like *Dawn of the Dead* except that the fans were not chanting "BRAINS!" as they were pawing at the players. Okay, I did high-five Brad Penny, but I did not scare Izturus like one guy did by screaming at him that he was the best, great, better than Jeter, over and over. Once again, I avoided eye contact.

At the same event, as the crowd begins to exit the field, a camera crew came over to where we were standing and asked a few questions to the woman next to us, but when she was told that she would be on television, she declined to answer. In moved the crazy Dodger fan, and the man holding the mike asked, "What does Dodger blue mean to you?" This opened the floodgates. The response was much like that of a first grader's paragraph on why he likes sharks or something. Dodger blue meant to him that he bleeds Dodger blue, like this one time when he was in jail and this guy shanked him, he bled Dodger blue. Notice that I didn't use quotes, but it did sound something like that and I decided that it would be best if I left. It has been so bad this season that the Dodger organization tried to get the L.A.P.D. to work security the games and they declined, so the powers that be came up with rules of conduct that were handed out, announced, and posted at the ball park. That seems to have done little good.

So what have I learned from all of this? I'm not sure. There is something about Dodger stadium that I like, maybe because that's where I went when I was a kid, though I will say that I wasn't always a fan of the team. I tend to follow players rather than teams. What is it that sets people off about sports? I can't believe that these people act the same at their jobs or at family functions, so what is the allure of acting like a jackass at a sporting event, what snaps in some heads that says, "I'll take a ride on the convict bus?" I don't know, but I will keep entertaining myself by watching two games for the price of one ticket. I don't know why the fans have to be this way. Hell, even today while pulling out of a fast food drive-through window, I was polite and let the man pushing an ice cream cart go

in front of me. He was wearing a Giants hat and I was wearing my Dodgers hat. Can't we all just get along?

COMIC PRESS NEWS

April 2005

Free if you're in Sacramento

So there I am in Sacramento, waiting for my wife to get out of her meeting, and I drive past this cool indie record store. I think, "After I pick her up, we'll go check it out." It was a way cool store and mixed in with the flyers at the front door is this cool newspaper. The cover states, "Editorial Cartoon & Humor Monthly," what could be better for a long weekend getaway? If political humor is the motivation for comics, this paper has hog tied it and won the blue ribbon at the state fair. The only thing that is lacking is that for a paper based in the city of the state capitol there seems to be no fun being poked at the governor. I picked something similar to this up in Santa Cruz once, but it wasn't political in nature. Most of the humor is directed at social security reform and energy consumption. Personally, I love this stuff. It is so strange that this stuff shows the simplicity of doing things the wrong way, yet no one in government seems to pay heed. I love this paper. Now I just have to see if they'll mail copies to the L.A. area. (Comic Press News, PO Box 162429, Sacramento, CA 95816, www.comicpress.com)

30 DAYS OF HATE

\$3.00 U.S.

By the Jessica Gao Dynasty

All right, so I'm at the comic and card show

that I often frequent and there on a corner is a guy selling these indie comics. I haven't seen an indie comic at this show for three years. So I buy two titles, three comics in total, and they turn out to be really cool. *30 Days* is great. Literally, this girl lists things that piss her off for thirty days. I can't believe how many things we have in common and I hope there are others like us, because she hits the truth way too often. Not much in the way of art, but the way she writes about experiences can create a mental picture rapidly. She does also lists a few loves, just enough to let you know that she's not sitting in a cell somewhere. The only problem is that there isn't a whole lot of contact information on this book. There's no press info, yet the book seems too well put together to be a homemade book. If this book can be found elsewhere, good luck, otherwise go to the Frank & Sons card show Wednesday nights and Saturdays in Walnut, CA. (yeknom@ucla.edu)

DANG

\$2.00 U.S.

By Martin Cendreda

Big heads and little bodies adorn the character in this little comic. *Dang* is the autobiographical musings of its creator. It's kinda like *Calvin and Hobbes* without the Hobbes. This guy creates some of the most bizarre situations a comic character can think up. *Dang* may be small physically but it's big on humor when you crack it open. If you happen to procure the X-mas edition you'll also enjoy some creative wrapping paper. This one was also found out

at Frank & Sons. (632 1/2 Micheltorena, LA, CA 90026, zurikrobot.com)

TOWN O CRAZIES Vol. 3, Issue 1

Short stories by various writers

The bizarre art of *Town O Crazies* put to story is a must read. The previous issues of *Town O Crazies* have just been artwork from what I can remember, but having stories behind them makes it so much creepier. If these shorts were a movie, it would be like letting Tim Burton remake *Creepshow*. The best story is "Jed's Apple Tree" by Jerome Opena. It's a brutal story of revenge, yet so satisfying you can't put it down. The artwork is horrifically beautiful and tweaks the brain into what witch trials must have been like. If *Town O Crazies* ever goes collection hardback, push your way to the front of the line, behind me, of course. (Scrapbook Manifesto, 1000 Powell St. #73, SF, CA 94108)

DUPPY

By Ansis

This one's a collection of shorts that shows the artist's fascination with zombies and robots with a spatter of voodoo. The nice thing about zombies, I guess, is that there is no dialect; after all, the dead can't speak. Didn't find this one giving me a ride, maybe because of the order in which I read the comics this time around. Not to say it was bad, it's just kinda disjointed for me. Whenever I'd get into one story, it ended abruptly and was followed by a complete 180. (14 Saxon Rd., Newton, MA 02467, www.ansis.info)





**She drank straight
from the bottle but
with a raised pinkie.
A child of breeding.**

THE OBSOLETE BOOKS DEPARTMENT

Harvey kept telling me that I was gonna lose my job if I didn't stop working so hard. Harvey was the boss. I needed to listen to him, but I couldn't get my mind wrapped around it. I was used to working construction jobs with a redneck breathing down my neck saying shit like, "Hurry, hurry, hurry. We gotta pour this slab in an hour." Or, "If this roof ain't nailed off by lunchtime, you're working through lunch." This new job at the School Board warehouse was a strange and beautiful world for me.

I didn't actually work in the warehouse. I worked outside of it, in an old school portable. My job was to stack obsolete textbooks and library books by grade and subject. I was given three months to do this. Three weeks into the job, I was more than half finished. That was why Harvey kept warning me to slow down. He told me, "I'll bring you one pallet of books this week. Make it last."

I was working so hard because Christina wasn't returning my calls. When I worked, I didn't think about her. I didn't think about anything except the obsolete books. As soon as I stopped working, though. Boy, don't you know I was thinking about her.

The problem was that halfway through Monday, I was halfway through my pallet. If Harvey saw this, he'd get on my case. I didn't want Harvey on my case. I liked Harvey. And it wouldn't do me any good to lose this job. So I slowed things down. I combed through the stack of old library books. I found a nonfiction book about unsolved crimes and read the chapter about Jack the Ripper. But this wasn't helping me kill time. I'd burned twenty minutes, tops. I needed something big and longwinded. Something I could lose myself in for hours, so I started looking at spine sizes. I found one really thick book called *Tom Jones*, and I couldn't believe it, because this sucker was nine hundred pages long, and that seemed like a lot to write about a lounge singer. I pulled it out of the stacks.

One paragraph in, I realized that it wasn't about that Tom Jones. It was an old British novel about this kid who, pretty much from the time he crawled out of the womb, got yanked around by women. I could relate. I liked that, right from the beginning, the author said it was his job to tell a story to ordinary people. I was nothing if not ordinary. So I walked around to the back steps of the portable and took a seat. From where I was, I'd be able to hear if anyone came to

check up on me. And I could catch a breeze off the swamps to the west. I settled in for a long read.

The thing about Tom was that he was nuts for this broad Sophia, and he had good reason to believe that she dug him, but everything—class, society, some weasely rich kid named Blifil—conspired to keep them apart. But fucking Tom hung in there. And he had a good time hanging in there. He traveled all around, he drank, he slept with older women, and sure he ended up at the gallows, but it seemed like a fun ride there. So I really got into Tom's adventures.

I worked out a daily schedule. I'd stack books for my first hour at work, and for a half hour before and after lunch. The rest of the day, I'd read. Sometimes I'd hang out at the back steps. Sometimes, I'd lie across a bed of obsolete science textbooks. Sometimes I'd sit on an office chair that I'd rescued out of the trash and pulled all the wheels off of so that it would sit flat. I spent about six hours a day hanging out with Tom Jones.

I liked to see myself as Tom, too. I was hanging in there. I wasn't getting drunk or traveling or sleeping with older women, but I was nuts for Christina and holding out hope. We'd dated for two months during the spring semester. When the summer had come along, Christina went home to Long Island, and I went home to central Florida. We had plans for phone calls and letters and stuff. I sent two letters that she didn't respond to. We connected once or twice on the phone. After that, I left messages until I felt like a stalker. Then I quit calling.

My buddy George lived a couple of towns over from Christina. Their parents belonged to the same country club. George told me that Christina was running around with some rich kid from Long Island. I didn't believe him. Blifil was trying to feed Tom Jones the same kind of shit about Sophia. Tom hung in there, and so did I.

At the end of that week, Tom got saved from the gallows. He hooked up with Sophia. Harvey came by the portable, saw that books on the pallet had been emptied and stacked, and he said, "You're doing a good job, son." I started feeling good about my chances.

The next Monday, Harvey brought me another pallet of books and told me to make them last all week. I nodded and said I would, but I was lying. I got right to work, sorting and stacking books. I worked like

mad. Broke a sweat, even. And the pallet was empty by two o'clock.

I sat on the back steps and unfolded the letter that was in my pocket. I reread it again. Tom Jones may have gotten away with all that shit, but I wasn't going to. I had my Dear John letter in my hands. George wasn't shitting me. Christina had another guy.

I thought back to the first date I had with Christina. We'd gone to a party that her friends were having just off campus. It was a Mardi Gras party. Everyone but us was in costume. The house was loud and tight and hot and Christina said to me, "Steal those two bottles and let's get out of here."

I grabbed the tequila and margarita mix like they belonged to me, and we went out into the backyard. It was packed, too, but Christina told me to follow her. She climbed onto the handrail of the deck, and pulled herself onto the roof from there. I handed the bottles up to her, and climbed onto the roof, too. We walked over the peak and sat down just over the front porch. I pried the pour spout off the tequila, poured margarita mix straight into the bottle, and shook it up. I took one taste, just to make sure it was all right, then handed it to Christina. She drank straight from the bottle but with a raised pinkie. A child of breeding.

We hung out on the roof and watched the party and costumes from up there. It was exciting, way up there with a pretty girl and a stolen bottle. With everyone floating around below me. Christina drank and told the kind of stories that you can only tell when you're twenty years old and on a first date: insignificant adolescent moments that sound sweet when her eyes can glow a little and the moon is right. In between stories, Christina kept saying, "I hope I don't get too drunk to climb down." I could tell it scared her, but she liked the fear. And that's exactly how I felt about her.

So when she sent me that shitty, typewritten letter and I read it on the back steps of that portable, that's what I thought about: the sweet moment of anticipation when Christina could've been everything. I didn't think about the times she called me her white trash toy. I didn't think about that one time when we were playing darts and she threw a dart at me, just fucking around, but it went into an eyehole of my Chucks and stuck in my foot. And I definitely didn't think about all the bad shit I did to her, which was probably the worst of it. I just thought of that one perfect moment, and got

mad that it didn't work out.

I was so angry that I went inside to ask Harvey for another pallet of books, just because I knew it would piss him off. He said, "Damn it, son. Slow down." But he pointed to a forklift and a pallet, and I got the books my damn self.

I did slow down the next day. I found a copy of *Catcher in the Rye* in the stacks. I'd never read it and always meant to, so I sat down on the reclaimed office chair and got started.

I don't know if it was because I was mad about Christina or what, but I couldn't get into it. Something about that kid Holden. He was such a whiner. And so rich. I guess that was my problem. He was so rich. He got private school paid for him and he didn't even care and even got kicked out and here I was, working construction and in warehouses to help pay my way through college. It pissed me off. I pictured Holden as exactly the kind of rich New Yorker who Christina had taken up with. It made me mad. It wasn't the right book for me. I finished it, but only because I didn't have much else to do.

Next, I pulled a book out of the stacks called *The Joke*. It was from Czechoslovakia, but translated into English. It was about this kid who couldn't separate love from hate and had a fucked up relationship with a really selfish girl. That calmed me down quite a bit. I spent so much time reading that Harvey came out at the end of the week just to make sure I was still showing up for work.

The next week, I was depressed. All the anger had worn me out. It was easy to work at a slow pace. I plowed through half a pallet of books in two days, not stopping to read but getting about as much done as when I had stopped to read. No sweat was broken. I just picked up books, one at a time, trudged over to the stacks, shelved the books, and trudged back to the pallet. It was pitiful.

This probably would've gone on indefinitely if I hadn't come across a copy of *Great Expectations*. I'd never been a fan of Charles Dickens, but this was a really cool hardcover copy. It was tiny, like a cheap paperback, and the pages were made out of that paper that Bibles are sometimes made of. The kind that you can roll up and smoke. I sat on the reclaimed office chair and got started.

Again, it was a book about a poor kid who goes nuts over a rich broad. I liked that. And I could tell that this poor kid probably wasn't gonna get the broad in the end. Or, if he did, she wouldn't be all that he'd hoped for. So I was down with this book. It was sad and self-indulgent and matched my mood. I read for the rest of the day.

Towards the end of the book, Harvey came out to see me. One of the warehouse clerks had gotten arrested. It was a minor possession charge, but the clerk was black and this was the South, so he got sixty days in the county pen. Harvey didn't want to hire some-

one to replace the clerk, and I had about sixty days before the fall semester, so he told me to get cracking with the rest of the books, then he'd transfer me to the warehouse proper. I couldn't have been happier.

I spent a week stacking the rest of the portable. Harvey set aside a forklift for me, so in the morning, I could grab a pallet, unload it by eleven, get a new one, and empty it by quitting time. All the work felt good. I felt useful again. I started to accept that Christina was part of my past. I stopped thinking much about her.

On my first day in the big warehouse, Harvey gave me a packing slip. I had to have all the books on pallets and ready to ship out by three o'clock. I was done by noon. I asked Harvey for a new slip. "You're gonna have to learn to work right, son," he said. "Now get out of here." I asked the other guys in the warehouse what I was supposed to do next, and they told me not to be an asshole. I grabbed a copy of *The Stranger* from the racks and headed back out to my portable until it was time to load the trucks.

I got the hang of the big warehouse pretty quick. I learned to load and hide my pallets early, then make myself scarce. Sometimes I napped on boxes of Salisbury steaks in the cooler. Sometimes I hung out with the old ladies who repaired the instructional films. They weren't all that interesting to talk to, but they worked in the air conditioning, and sitting in air conditioning was better than sitting in none. They'd spend all day rewinding reels of film and taping the film wherever it cracked or split. Sometimes, they'd let me set up a projector and watch a movie. The movies were the exact same ones I'd slept through in high school, but it was more fun to sleep through them when I was making \$6.75 an hour. One old lady who repaired film was named Gertie. She took a little shine to me. She kept telling me about her granddaughter Tammy. About what a great girl she was, what a catch, and I should really meet her. I humored Gertie. I'd put up with a lot for air conditioning. And who was I to crush ol' Gertie's daydreams?

Only, one day, with about five weeks left in the summer, I went into Harvey's office. All the clerks were hanging around, gossiping like a sewing circle. I got my packing slip and started to clear out, but Harvey said, "Get that filled out early. Go see the film ladies today."

I thought he was getting on my case about slacking off so much. But really, how could the guy who sat in the office all day, gossiping with clerks and telling everyone to slow down, really be cracking on me for working too slow?



It didn't make sense until a little just before lunch, when Harvey caught up with me as I was hiding my pallets. He said, "You seen the film ladies yet?"

"Nah," I said.

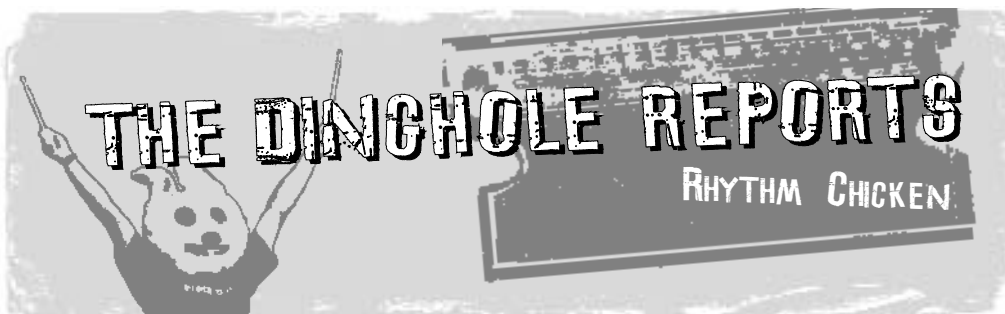
"Go see 'em. They got a new girl working there," Harvey said. He gave me a big toothy smile and a little elbow nudge and said, "Boy, if I was your age, I'd have that girl out in them portables. You wouldn't see nothing through that window but my ass bouncing up, if you know what I'm saying."

How could I not know?

The new girl's name was Tammy. Of course. We met in the lunch room. She knew she was being set up and I knew I was being set up, so it was awkward at first. We danced around a few subjects and I told a few bad jokes and she laughed anyway. She had brown hair pinned back in barrettes and that little bit of extra weight that I like on girls. She was wearing her dad's blue work shirt because she said she didn't want to ruin her good clothes at the warehouse. Part of it all seemed artificial, but damn if she wasn't my kind of girl.

My heart still had a bit of a hangover from Christina, but one sweet look from Tammy and that all started to fade away. I decided right then that, if she asked me to sneak off into the film stacks and watch a driver's ed movie with her, I'd do it. Hell, I thought, maybe I'll ask her myself.

—Sean Carswell



It was just stupid enough to be a pretty good idea!

The Suck My Beak Tour 2005

The Dinghole Reports
By the Rhythm Chicken
(commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

(Good morning, folks. Francis Funyuns here. I wholly regret to inform you that my identity accusation from last issue's column was quite false. I was quite positive that our own Todd Taylor was the Rhythm Chicken. It all made so much sense. I mean who WOULD-N'T want to be from Wisconsin? Not to mention all those unfortunate Californians! - F.F.)

[Excuse me, Francis. Maybe I should interrupt before you get us fired. We've found a few bits of evidence that lend us to believe that Todd is indeed NOT the Rhythm Chicken. After rereading previous Dinghole Reports concerning the Chicken's visit to Southern California, we noticed that the photos of his traveling circus of chaos were taken by none other than Todd himself. Once again, this leaves us with the great question, "Who is the Rhythm Chicken?" - Dr. S.]

(I know what you're thinking. The Doctor and I, being his two closest companions in his crusade, should know who the Clark Kent is beneath that furry wrestling mask. Well, truth be known, the few times we've seen him without that big furball on his head we've been too drunk to truly recognize his naked image. So far, we are sure of three things: he is not Todd Taylor, he is not the good Dr. Sicnarf, and he is not me. - F.F.)

[We've heard all the accusations, and some of them carry some weight. Being Polish and from Green Bay, the Rev. Nørb could very well be the Rhythm Chicken. But would Todd give two entire blocks of column space to the same Wisconsinite? Nardwuar? Ben Weasel? Brett Favre? Dan Panic? Paddy? Grant Hart? We've ruled all these folks out, simply by their superior drumming abilities. - Dr. S.]



The Chicken, in flight...

(Yes, they were all understandable accusations. But, only those who've heard the Chicken's timeless slop-rock would know how truly BAD a drummer he is. Unless you've been lucky enough to cross paths with one of his tours de ruckus, you really don't know how bad he is. Lucky for the Chicken, those damn ears usually keep everyone's attention off of his ailing rudimentary skills. I mean, how would someone from Wells, Nevada or Monticello, Minnesota know that his percussive skills are quite nonexistent? I mean, unless you actually witness his Ruckusness, how are you to know he can barely drum at all? - F.F.)

—Suddenly, the door creaks open and a very tired looking Rhythm Chicken crawls in.—

So, you slick-slacks have started my column without me AGAIN! If I weren't so damn busy I'd give BOTH of your dingholes the ol' wire brush treatment! I have only three weeks left of being a Blatz-swilling American before I fly off to Poland again, and my duties before I leave are having me burning the midnight oil on a nightly basis. Now, in the interest of wasting no time, let me see where you two dildoheads left off... ah, yes. If one is unfortunate enough to have not seen my divine drumming, how could one possibly know of my percussive grace? Well, I guess this naturally brings us to today's story! Gather 'round, kids! My time's short these days.

[Francis, you better keep your mouth shut this time! - Dr. S.]

Well, today's story began in the middle of last issue's Dinghole Report. Somewhere in D.H.R.#66, I found myself quite exhausted and thrashed up after just belly flopping onto my drums in the men's room at the Onopa brewpub. While attempting to gather and move aside the remnants of my chickenkit, I was approached by one Mr. John Gehring. John owns and runs Haunted House Recordings, a basement studio hidden in the bowels of Milwaukee's southside.

He would lean over and say, "I think the Rhythm Chicken really should record a record with me." All I could do was laugh it off. What an absurd thought. I briefly pictured me setting up my thrift store drum kit in his professional studio with microphones meticulously placed here and there to catch the "true" sound of the Rhythm Chicken. Out of breath, I could only tell him, "No, I don't think so. That wouldn't make much sense." I packed my kit away and retired to the bar. The rest of the night I put more thought into his offer while putting more Blatz into my belly. It did seem quite pointless, a record of just drumming. How would anyone know of the chaos? Then again, I had to remind myself that pointlessness is one of the founding

cornerstones of Wisconsinism. If I could somehow capture that chaos, then I would consider such a venture. At some point near bartime I found myself sitting next to John at the Cactus Club. We were holding the Great Summit. One of these happens at the C-Club almost nightly. After bouncing a few ideas back and forth, a little compromising here, a little stubborn insistence there, a lot of chilled Blatz here AND there, and we had formulated a functioning charter. That night we hatched the idea which will surely take punk rock into the next phase!

{You're like the Elvis of punk rock! – Lord Kveldulfr}

Get him outta here! I really don't have time for any hoppin' hooshwash today! SOOOOOOO, that night we hammered out the plan. We agreed that a Rhythm Chicken recording surely could NOT be done conventionally in a studio environment. It had to be done on his own turf, the tavern! The Rhythm Chicken could not conceivably release an entire album of his works, though the pointlessness of it did sound appealing. The true fire and ruckus of a Chicken recording could only be captured at a live show in his natural habitat. The focus of the recording could not be on the drumming itself, but on the sounds of the entire room. The drums would be just another room sound in the mix, blended in with the bar glasses clanking, the curses of the old man at the end of the bar, and the drunken hoots and hollers of the patrons. It would be a symphonic composition even Chopin would appreciate! So we decided it would be a live recording in the tavern setting with just two room mics placed at the back of the room. It would be released as a 45. This gave us a chance to choose two different venues to be grooved into wax. Instead of choosing different songs for each side, we were choosing different venues, two different "studios." The decision really was not too difficult. The Rhythm Chicken live 45 would be as follows:

Side A: The Rhythm Chicken live at National Liquor Bar

Side B: The Rhythm Chicken live at Koz's Mini-Bowl

The next morning I was at work thinking about the previous night's brainstorm. The more I thought about it, the more I thought it was just stupid enough to be a pretty good idea! Top of the Pops, indeed!

—The phone rings.—

[Hello, residence of the Rhythm Chicken... Who is this?... Sire Records? – Dr. S.]

—The Chicken violently grabs the phone and slams it back down.—

Damn them! Can't a Chicken get a column done without all these interruptions?! Now, where was I? Oh yes, the live 45. So, the vinyl 45 was the obvious choice, with the large dinghole. I began preparations. I put together a flyer advertising the event. It was on a Saturday afternoon, when the National Liquor Bar was at its eclectic peak. The flyer read, "2:00 PM Cheap Beer Social, 4:00 PM RUCKUS! Bring your liver! Bring your

mouth!" How could I make it any more clear? This was going to be a recording capturing the authentic sounds of a Wisconsin tavern! From last issue's descriptions of these venues, I'm sure you would agree that they were fine choices for each side of this release. The arrangements were made. The plans were set. The Rhythm Chicken was actually going to record a smash hit record! It was a long, anxious wait till that Saturday!

—The phone rings again.—

[Hello, residence of the Rhythm Chicken... Who?... Dave Geffen? – Dr.S.]

HANG THAT UP! If you two slick-slacks can't even figure out who I am, how can the major label fat cats find my phone number? That damn Chickenphone's been ringing off the hook!

Dinghole Report #67:

The Recording of Ruckus!

(Rhythm Chicken sightings #356 & #357)

April 16, 2005 was just a day. The Rytm Kurcze fell out of bed, walked to the library, stopped at the Hi-Fi for some cluck-cluck juice, and scratched his way back to his coop. Ruckus O'Reily and Andrzej showed up so they cracked open some Zywiec. His beak was glistening in Zywiec froth as they strolled into the National Liquor Bar. It was shortly after 2:00 and there were already Chicken fans sitting around the bar partaking in the cheap beer social. I might just be flattering myself here, for they might have been there swilling cheap beer at this time even if there wasn't a scheduled Rhythm Chicken concert. The drums were tossed into the corner as we were soaked up by the crowd. More and more Chicken fans showed up as their anticipation swelled. The two scratchy-voiced old lady bartenders were continuously sliding bottles of Pabst over the bar. The bottles clanking, laughs and slurs of the patrons, and the creaking of barstools sounded like the pre-show tuning of all the stringed instruments from the orchestra pit. Shortly before showtime, John Gehring and John Burger showed up with two armloads of recording equipment. They were quite impressed that the day's equipment could fit in the back seat of his Saturn and named the traveling recording company Haunted Saturn Recording. The bewildered regulars at the National Liquor Bar inspected the stage setup. The barstools were pushed aside to make room for the crappy little drumset with the bass drum warning "The Rhythm Chicken." There was an odd sign duct-taped to the bar reading, "Rytm Kurcze jest krolewskie koszmar!" All the polish-speaking attendees agreed. Within minutes, the recording equipment was assembled and the concert hall quieted down as the orchestra finished their tuning and quieted their instruments. The Rhythm Chicken then emerged from the men's room and majestically walked to his kit in the spotlight. The crowd clapped politely yet powerfully as the conductor approached his riser at center stage. After a short period of applause, he grabbed his baton and raised it skyward. The audience shushed and the room grew quiet. The Rhythm Chicken stood holding up his sign that read,

"SILENCE." The eerie moment of silence was almost too much for the drunken concert goers to take, so our hero then held up the second sign which had one beautiful word scrawled upon it: "RUCKUS!" The screams were deafening and the patrons began ripping out their theater seats! The holy opera of ruckus began with the opening drumroll. The cement floor and tin ceiling of the National Liquor Bar echoed the glorious thunder. Halfway through the opening drumroll, our hero dropped a drumstick and the crowd snickered. This was no rehearsal! The tapes were rolling! Punk rock! Grabbing a spare stick, he continued undaunted! What followed was a beautiful assortment of drunk-ass chicken rhythms interspersed with the beer-splashed cheers and heckles of the audience. Performer and audience members fed off each other's energy and lunacy as Haunted Saturn Recording captured every second of this great symphony. The cheers grew in volume and intensity while the tapes kept rolling. The Rhythm Chicken was getting caught up in the usual rituals of his show and toying with the audience, when he suddenly remembered the time limitations of one side of a 45. ABANDON SHIP! ABORT MISSION! Before he could even utilize his mighty ruckus logs, our hero desperately grabbed his drumset and tossed it about before doing some type of nongymnastical leap onto his pile of drum nestings. The concert hall erupted with great applause! Drunks were yelling, "Hurray!" One stray voice even belted out the word, "FUN!" Somewhere in the heavens, the half-bearded Chopin looked down and nodded with approval. Soon, our hero crawled his way backstage (the men's room) to the ongoing cheers of the audience. John pressed the stop button and side A was finished. No overdubs, no second takes, no hooshwash! This recording was the real deal!

—The phone rings again.—

[Hello, residence of the Rhythm Chicken... Herb Alpert?... from A&M Records? – Dr. S.]

—The Rhythm Chicken violently grabs the receiver and thrusts it up his dinghole!—

Now, where was I? Oh, yes. So side A was done. The drums were thrown into the Rooster Roller and like an efficient MASH unit, Haunted Saturn Recording was once again in John's back seat. The convoy of Chicken fans began the migrating carpool to the location of side B's recording, Koz's Mini-Bowl. Upon entering the corner tavern, the traveling circus noticed that the place was all decked out with balloons and decorations. There were many children roaming in an out while grandparents, aunts, and uncles sat at the bar downing one dollar mugs of Pabst. It turns out that there was a birthday party for three of the neighborhood kids. I thought the only way to ensure a full Chicken gig recording was to get the okay from the owner. After being asked if there could be a quick concert in the back room, Mrs. Koz replied, "Well, as long as you play 'Happy Birthday'!" I thought about it for a bit. The Chicken has never really played "Happy Birthday" before, but what the cluck! We got the green light. The chickenkit and Haunted



*Chickens never fly for very long...
air gets stuck in their dingholes.*

Saturn were loaded in. Before long, the entire Chicken-friendly crowd from the National Liquor Bar arrived. John and John excitedly proclaimed that they noticed a large pig being roasted along the side of the building for the party! There were a few more Chicken fans that missed the side A gig, but managed to catch this one. "Happy Birthday," huh? Well, I found Christeater, the official birthday song ringleader from the Cactus Club. I knew he would get the ball rolling, and the plans were set. The Chicken fans were steadily emptying the tavern of their Pabst supply. The tapper ran dry and they were now selling \$1 cans. I shared a few libations with my public, enjoying the various oddities displayed about the bar room. My newest discovery at Koz's was a stuffed badger up behind the bar that wears a little miniature cheesehead, and the cheesehead itself has a little mouth and eyes! I swear, every time you look closely around Koz's there's something new, but it's all been there for the last thirty years! Yes, I was confident in my choice of venue for side B. The badger wearing the smiley-faced cheesehead clinched it! Wisconsin, what a country! Soon, our hero emerged from the men's room to the gathering applause. I sat at my throne and held up the SILENCE sign. Just then, the jukebox kicked in and the room filled with the soothing voice of Willie Nelson singing, "When I was seventeen... it was a very good year." It was too perfect. It couldn't have worked out that well had I planned it! Most of the ruckus militia thought it was orchestrated that way, so I played along. This is when I held up the RUCKUS sign and the place just erupted with drunken cheers. The opening drumroll commenced and wavered until I held both wings up to more applause. Then Christeater triggered the crowd with, "Haaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaappy Birthday to you....." and the whole place began singing the well known tune. I was playing some sort of heavy metal backbeat to the traditional favorite, thinking about how most of the folks singing had no idea WHOSE birthday it was. Well the third verse came around and, as I anticipated, the drunken crowd sang

valiantly, "HAPPY BIRTHDAY DEAR HMMMMM-HMMMMM!" Listening back to the tapes now I can even hear a couple people singing, "Happy Birthday dear PEOPLE!" This was an unexpected addition to my regular chicken show, but welcomed nonetheless! The song ended and my heavy metal beat gave way to my usual all-out chaos! More so than before, the room of drunk chicken fans cheered along! I toyed with them and played them like a grand piano. I raised them up. I raised them down. They were in the palm of my wing. Then I remembered what was absent at the recording of side A and flung my little drum sticks aside. Reaching back behind my kit I found my terrible twigs, the RUCKUS LOGS! Raising them skyward, I rumbled the bass drum and displayed my weapons to the gasps and WHOOOOAH's of the well-Pabsted clan. I was able to throw a few monster rock beats at the crowd before I once again remembered my time restraints. This time I chose to execute a graceful belly flop onto my chickenkit, tumbling forward and landing on the edge of the first mini-bowling lane. The applause was more thunderous than ever. Men bellowed. Ladies shrieked. The Dalmatian howled. Did I mention the Dalmatian? I don't think *Land Speed Record* had a Dalmatian in the audience! Their cheers slowly died down and someone yelled out, "One more set!" I grabbed the little mini-ball rack next to the lane and raised myself up to more cheers. Christeater wouldn't let the show end and started everyone up again with another "Haaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaappy Birthday to you..." The entire room was even drunker and sang along with heartfelt passion. No longer seated at my drums, I just did a little tail-wagging dance with a little chicken-booty shake-n-bake. "Happy Birthday dear HMMMMM-HMMMMM!" The crowd cheered one last time, this time for their own singing and I crawled backstage. John pressed the stop button and the day's recording was complete. I had done it. The Rhythm Chicken had completed his first ever real recording with intent to duplicate! I thought about it all again. Yup, it still seemed quite absurd. I loved it all

the more. While loading my drums out they brought in the pig to the head table and started cutting slabs-o-meat for the friends and family. The guy doing the butchering held out a large slab of the other white meat to me and said, "Payment for a fine show!" I was more than delighted to grab and inhale the other white meat, knowing it was not me.

—Phone rings again, this time from inside the Chicken's dinghole!—

I'll get this one... Hello, residence of the Rhythm Chicken... oh really? Warner Brothers wants to release my live 45?... Yeah?... Cocaine and champagne, you say?... Signing bonus?... Uh huh... HOOSHWASH! BUCK-AW! You keep your money. I'll keep my recording! GOOD-BYE!

—The Chicken rips the phone off the wall and throws it out the window!—

(Wow, Chicken! You really are keeping your 45 on a DIY level, aren't you? – F.F.)

The release will have no record label's name at all. It will be as if it just appeared from nowhere. A divine gift of ruckus, born of no label, direct from my dinghole! And just to make it an all-out media blitz of ruckus, I'm including a bonus DVD inside every copy of the 45, video documentation of both recording sessions and slide show! This is truly groundbreaking!

[I've certainly never heard of a 45 with a bonus DVD included. Once again, you are pioneering into new areas, Mr. Chicken. Can I pre-order mine? – Dr. S.]

(Yeah, and aren't you leaving to go back to Poland in like three weeks? You certainly keep busy, Chicken. You know what? I think I've got it! You're from Green Bay... You now live in Milwaukee... I've got it. THE RHYTHM CHICKEN IS ANDY JUNK!!! – F.F.)

Need I remind you who took the photos for my Dinghole Report #18?

[Dang! Well, let me think here... You're from Green Bay... You live in Milwaukee... You drink Blatz... YOU'RE LORD KVELDUL-FR!!! – Dr. S.]

This is all getting quite amusing. If I actually did reveal my identity to you two, it would be quite anti-climatic and then I would have to kill you both. Well, you know, the Deepthroat guy from the Watergate scandal just revealed himself yesterday. Maybe I'll follow his example and wait till I'm ninety, but for now I'm just gonna move back to Poland and keep you guessing. Before finishing up I would like to ask all the *Razorcake* readers if anyone knows how the Green Bay polka mass started?

Jestescie guwniaza!

—Rhythm Chicken
rhythmchicken@hotmail.com

Chrystaei Branchaw's Photo Page

GANG OF FOUR

The Indian smiles, he thinks that

the cowboy is his friend.



The cowboy smiles, he is glad

the Indian is fooled.

Now he can



exploit him.

Ever wonder why some debut records simply blow other band's fourth or fifth release out of the water? Sometimes it's the band members past experience—which all four members of this band have. Bill Nesper did time with Discount. Everyone else played in Jury Rig in the mid-1990s. When Jury Rig spontaneously combusted, it took until 2001 before Amanda MacKaye, Ryan Nelson, and Todd McDonald decided to regroup and make music again.

Their self-titled record, released in the fall of 2004, was worth the wait. Intertwining vocals from Ryan and Amanda seamlessly flow with the scientific precision of Bill on drums and Todd on bass. Ryan's guitar adds a fevered grittiness to the proceedings. In other words, you want to go out and get their new record now before you have to listen to some other retread garbage on the radio. This disc is miles away from anything like

that. With songs like "Messy Room" and "Pussy Pants," how can it not?

The band was gracious enough to sit down with me in between band slots, where they had just finished a killer set supporting Visqueen and Shonen Knife. You can easily procure their record off Dischord Records' site, where it is a joint release with Sammich Records, the label Amanda also runs. Or pick it up at their next gig—after the rock of The Routineers has pummeled your head like a cheap billyclub.

Interview by Sean Koepenick

Photos by Ted Tuel

Original artwork by

Amy Adoyzie

"WE PLAYED IN A BURRITO STORE IN NEW BRUNSWICK."

Sean: How and when did each of you get involved with music?

Ryan: I started playing music when I was really young. My brother and I would play classic rock tunes. We just listened to my Dad's record collection a lot. We'd end up trying to play those songs.

Amanda: I was about eight or nine. My brothers had bands so I had to have one, too. I had a band with my neighbor who was a year younger than me. I was nine, he was eight, and we started a band with his twenty-seven-year-old cousin. We had one instrument—the acoustic guitar, and everything else was cardboard boxes and kitchen utensils. Then my friend (the eight year old) tried to teach himself how to play harmonica.

Ryan: Because the band needed a harmonica!

Amanda: Well, yes. But we had all the kind of regular band problems—we had some management issues. We practiced for awhile and then it started to fall off so we ended up breaking up. Then we added some other instruments—some keyboards and strings. It wasn't really working out, though.

Ryan: Some tennis rackets

Amanda: Did you see us? We ended up playing two shows.

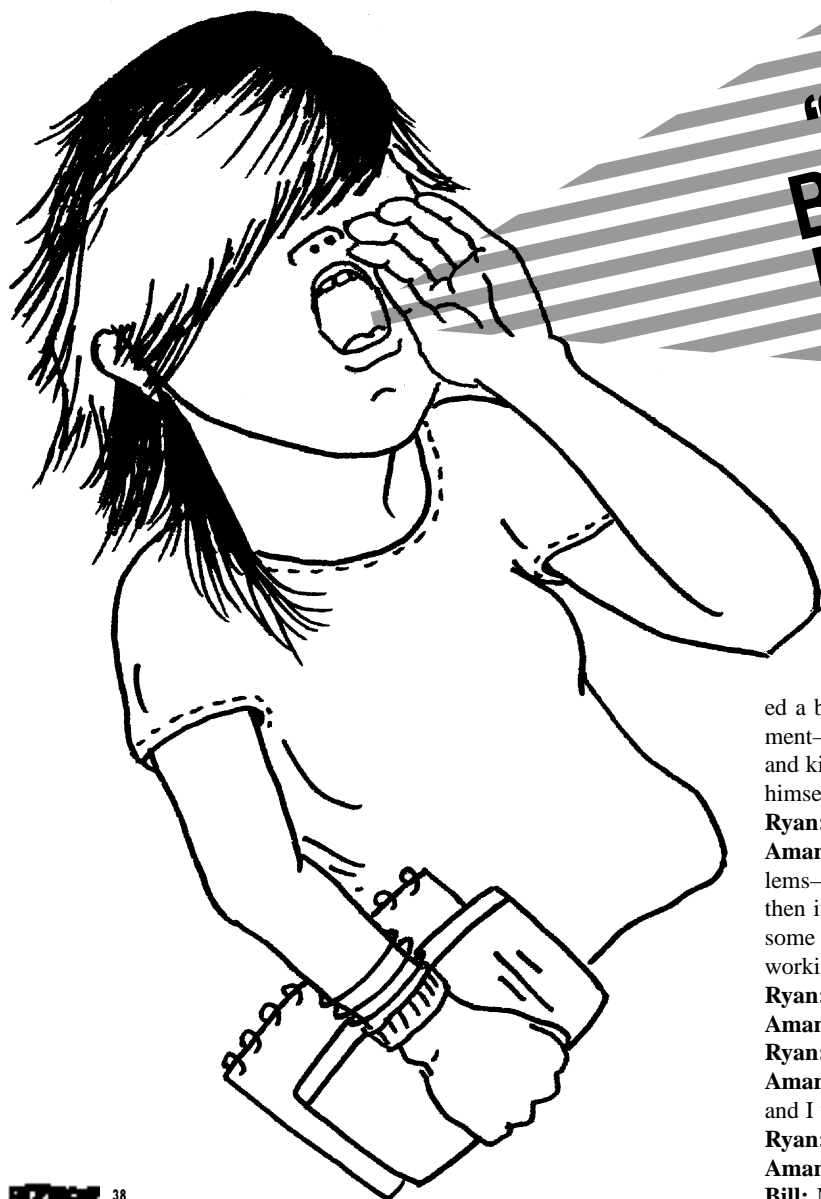
Ryan: Amanda had a white suit jacket on...

Amanda: And a white Blues Brothers shirt underneath. We had roles and I was the "cool" one. My friend Oliver was "the hobo."

Ryan: Who is "the hobo" in The Routineers?

Amanda: You're looking at 'em—right here [points at herself].

Bill: My Dad played piano, so when I was really young. He tried to



ROUTINEERS



make me play piano and I really didn't take to it. They convinced me to be in chorus too. But I actually really enjoyed it. So I sang in school, but then I realized it was kind of geeky and that I would rather surf. I started playing drums when I was like sixteen or seventeen. I lived in a small town. There were two bands in town, and in my circle of friends there wasn't a drummer. So I got my set of "Jugs" drums. These were really low budget—more than the CB-700 set. They were like a Pearl knock-off.

Todd: I had gone to shows and it seemed like anyone could do it, so my friends and I decided we would start a band. Both of us were like, "Okay, whoever gets the bass will be the bassist and the other guy will be the singer," but my friend got the bass and then I ended up being the singer. I kept going to shows but I didn't come to play bass until I was like twenty-two or twenty-three.

Amanda: You're twenty-four now?

Todd: Yes, I'm twenty-four now. You can tell by the way I play bass. I decided I would teach myself an instrument.

Sean: What bands or artists did you listen to during that same time period?

Ryan: When I first started playing music, we pretty much listened to anything we could get our hands on. We raided my father's record collection. I remember finding a Grandmaster Flash tape in fifth grade. I couldn't get enough of Grandmaster Flash and UTFO. At the same time I was listening to the Beatles, Led Zeppelin, and the Beach Boys, so it sort of ran all over the place. We were listening to a lot of contemporary stuff. Back

then it wasn't like punk stuff but, like, Judas Priest *You've Got Another Thing Comin'*.

Amanda: A lot of the same stuff. None of the classic rock stuff, but like the Beatles and the Who and stuff. My brothers were into punk rock, so I started to like Stiff Little Fingers, Sex Pistols, and then their bands.

Ryan: Your brothers listened to a lot of British punk rock.

Amanda: Yeah, this was from '77 to 1980 when I was getting heavily influenced by them. Then they started playing in bands. First record I ever bought though was Kiss *Alive*. Somehow I thought it made sense. They seemed real punk in a way—real tough. It was mostly...

Ryan: Paul Stanley's sex appeal [laughs].

Amanda: Yeah, right. But all the early punk stuff, and my brothers were into Ted Nugent and Santana.

Bill: My dad played a lot of piano stuff. I know this sounds really funny but my Dad used to play ragtime and boogie-woogie and things like that. So I was into that when I was really, really young. Then I got into Kiss. I liked the whole act. I just don't get it now. What was I thinking?

Amanda: "Calling Dr. Love?" C'mon, man!

Bill: Prince was the first 7" record I bought. *When Doves Cry*. Duran Duran, *The Reflex*.

Ryan: You have a *Reflex* tattoo right?

Bill: Yeah, sure, it's on my lower back! I'll show you later.



**“LET’S NOT
GET TOO
PRECIOUS
ABOUT
THIS SHIT!”**

Ryan: The first two Duran Duran records I liked, but I couldn’t say it out loud.

Todd: There’s different punk music I listened to before I started playing music. My whole musical experience was based around punk rock. When I was younger I liked The Beatles, The Beach Boys, and all that stuff. My first record was *Convoy*. I was the youngest of five so I grew up on classic rock from my other brothers. But as far as playing music, I wanted to be in a band that sounded like Reagan Youth. That was the biggest thing when I was growing up. I like New York hardcore and the old *MRR* comps. Anything obscure and fast I liked. We were in the Midwest. We didn’t have much of our own dynamic so we kind of picked from wherever. I mean, people liked The Replacements but nobody really considered them our own. We liked the West Coast stuff because it was really fast and aggressive. I liked East Coast stuff, too, but it was kind of all over the place.

Sean: Who played at the first concert you ever attended?

Ryan: I love that question. Didn’t I ask that of the audience when we played at Josie’s?

Amanda: First concert or first show?

Sean: First live band you remember.

Amanda: The Slinkees. And then The Teen Idles.

Ryan: Mine is terrible. Van Halen with Sammy Hagar. That was my first concert. My Mom took my brother and I. But, technically, they weren’t the first band since Bachman Turner Overdrive opened for them.

Amanda: The first “stadium rock” show I went to was Aerosmith on the *Permanent Vacation* tour. For my twentieth birthday present, my brother was like, “You’ve never been to a stadium rock show?” So I went to see Aerosmith with The Black Crowes and somebody else. It was a dreadful night.

Todd: My first punk show—I’ll try and get points—was Toxic Reasons. The first concert was a band nobody’s ever heard of called Clover. A ‘70s hippie band.

Ryan: Man, did he ever want to be a singer with that band.

Todd: I just thought, “Man, if I could just play keyboards with them...”

Bill: I can’t remember. It may have been at the county fair with the Isley Brothers or something like that. Or it was more low-budget, like one of the Isley Brothers doing like a side project.

Amanda: The Isley Cousins?

Bill: Yeah, the Isley Cousins or something like that. I honestly don’t remember. Blood Sweat and Isley! Earth Wind and Tears! Where I lived

there wasn’t anywhere to go see shows. It wasn’t until I was like eighteen or so that we started setting up our own shows in this little school-house in Florida. We rented it out for twenty-five bucks per show. We bought a PA.

Ryan: Twenty-five bucks? You can’t beat that!

Bill: Fort Pierce, Florida.

Sean: How did the Routineers first get together?

Amanda: Todd, Ryan, and I all played in a band together called Jury Rig, and at some point three years ago, I begged Ryan to be in a band with me, or at least to record some songs. Many, many years ago Ryan and I had some “spoof” PJ Harvey songs that we played in my apartment. He played acoustic guitar and I sang. We decided we should record them. We thought it would be really funny.

Ryan: It was funny.

Amanda: We still haven’t done it yet. But somehow that worked into starting a band. I ran into Todd and thought, “Hey, we should play music because Bill’s moving up here and drummers are scarce.” So we kept it on the down-low. “There’s a new drummer in town.” Literally, the band started when I mailed Ryan some lyrics while I was out of town and he wrote a song. Then I came back and went over to his house and we played that song together.

Ryan: I think I had four songs. I had always played drums in other bands, but I had four songs on guitar that I didn’t know what to do with. So when Amanda said, “Let’s play some music,” I was all ready to go. When she sent me some lyrics, I already had a riff and I tried to work a melody into it.

Amanda: It’s the one we don’t play, “Song One.”

Bill: It’s gone.

Ryan: Yeah, it sucks to be us. It’s amazing because Todd, Amanda, and I were in Jury Rig, and I played drums in that band. Jury Rig’s break-up was fucking hardcore. My recollection is sitting on a porch and looking every band member in the eyes and saying, “I don’t want to play with any of you fuckers anymore!”

Todd: I think that was the last time I spoke to Amanda until many years later.

Ryan: Our break-up was terrible.

Amanda: This is an earth-shattering moment because we were able to come back together after such a violent breakup.

Ryan: It was pretty crazy. But Todd and I became friends; we buried the hatchet. And Amanda and I, over the years, worked stuff out. We would meet for coffee and talk and stuff. We were just friends again.

Amanda: It's like Metallica. We all have to have the services of great group therapists.

Ryan: We lay down on my porch and he asks us how we feel. I was thinking about this tonight. I've always played drums in bands. I love playing with Bill. In practice I smile constantly. It's so exciting to play with a drummer. I love what Bill comes up with. But it's crazy for me to hear the music on one side of my head. I'm so used to the music being all around me. It still fucks with me. It's a weird dynamic. It's a little bit easier in a practice space.

Todd: You should play with headphones.

Sean: Describe one of your most memorable gigs so far.

Bill: Definitely the burrito show.

Ryan: We played in a burrito store in New Brunswick. It wasn't a chain.

Bill: It was an original burrito place. It was all florescent lighting. They didn't shut down, either.

Amanda: People were like coming in, picking out their carry-out, and then going. They would stand there with their bag.

Todd: I think the only other band that had played there was like a lo-fi, two or three piece band.

Ryan: They were like, "You are the loudest band that's ever played here." I was like, "That's great!"

Bill: It was so much fun. The cook spoke no English whatsoever.

Ryan: He wanted a CD.

Bill: He had no reason to get one, he just wanted one.

Ryan: Yeah, it was awesome. But we also got added last minute to a bill in Albany. I'm really thankful that they let us play. But the penalty for being added at the last minute is you play last. It was before a lot of bands. I think it was a six-band bill?

Bill: Oh yeah, at least.

Ryan: It was a six-band bill including us. We played last. There were four people there.

Bill: There was a woman there at the show who was closer to our age who came to see the show. And she was picking up her son who played in the first band. I thought it was awesome because I thought it looked like exactly what I was doing at age seventeen.

Ryan: There were a lot of kids there—except when we played.

Bill: They had to go to bed.

Todd: I remember the house in Columbia Heights. My right elbow was hitting someone in the crowd. The end of my bass was under Bill's cymbal. You can feel people sweating on you. We were on top of each other.

Ryan: Kids started doing a soul clap.

Amanda: I had this opportunity during one of the songs that Ryan sings most of. I just turned around and stood in the front with everybody else. I watched the band and sang from there. It was such an interesting opportunity to watch my own band—while I was doing it. I encourage people to do that if you have the chance.

Sean: How does the songwriting process work for the band?

Ryan: Most of the time, Todd and I come to practice with riffs. We'll string them together or have something all together. Amanda and I have gotten together and worked on lyrics and vocal melodies. We haven't done it in awhile now. Lately we have just been making tapes of the songs. Amanda will think of something, or when I write a riff, we'll just get a vocal melody right away, and we'll just apply that to the song. And Amanda and I will get together and work on what she does in the song versus what I do in the song. It's kind of crazy, though. It's still new to me to do vocals, so when I do vocals I usually don't think about vocals for two.

Sean: Are there any current musicians that you would like to write a song with?

Ryan: We talked the other night about having my brother, so in the back of my mind I would love to play guitar with my brother if the Routineers ever did like a special "one-off" show with a special guest guitarist. My brother is Mark Nelson and I'm a huge fan. I love what he comes up with on guitar and I'm a huge fan of his lyrics.

Sean: How did the recording process work for your debut versus your previous bands?

Ryan: We do a lot of home recording. I have a Tascam eight-track quarter-inch reel to reel. Most of the recording on the record was done on the Tascam. I recorded my vocals, then Amanda's brother Ian (MacKaye) came over and recorded Amanda's vocals. The mix was done by me, Amanda, Ian and Don (Zientara) at Inner Ear. We brought my whole machine to Inner Ear, then we mixed it at the studio there. Then we also do tons of four-track demos. We just throw mics up and do four-track demos, which I think sometimes sounds better than the other stuff.

Todd: We try to re-create it but it's a struggle.

Amanda: I don't know about Bill's experience but I know these two have done this together before. I have only recorded in a studio before. This is interesting. Playing with the tape on and suddenly you have recorded a song. It's nice, like taking the veil off of making a record. It's kind of intimidating to go to a studio because it's a studio. It seems like such a deal.

Ryan: You are always thinking about time and money. We're here and you have to perform.

Amanda: When you are in your own space, it's a surprise; you've just recorded a song.

Ryan: With Routineers stuff we want a dirtier sound. Todd and I are constantly talking about bands with like narly, gritty guitar sounds. Vocals like puking and crackling and all that shit, like the garage-est sound, which we didn't do on the record. But it was part of the appeal. When we were recording it we kept saying, "Let's not get too precious about this shit!"

Then I would turn around and get real precious on it.

Amanda: The first band that I recorded with, we did it in basement studios. GNS studios were in the basement over in Arlington. Both Jeff Turner and Barrett's basements had been reconstructed to studios. I mean, I'm looking at the furnace. There are no walls around the soundboard.

Ryan: You can definitely hear the furnace through the song!

Amanda: It was good. When we recorded, it was the winter and we had to turn the heat off in the house so it wouldn't keep clicking on and off.

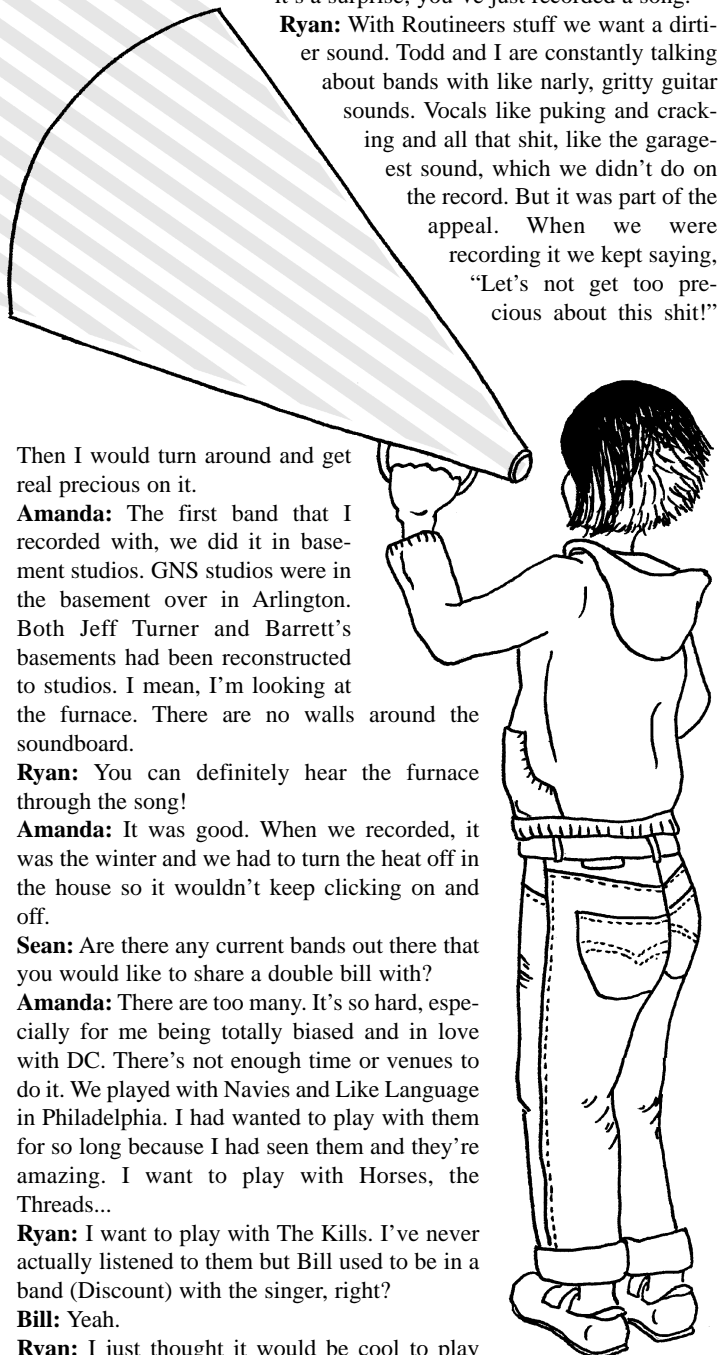
Sean: Are there any current bands out there that you would like to share a double bill with?

Amanda: There are too many. It's so hard, especially for me being totally biased and in love with DC. There's not enough time or venues to do it. We played with Navies and Like Language in Philadelphia. I had wanted to play with them for so long because I had seen them and they're amazing. I want to play with Horses, the Threads...

Ryan: I want to play with The Kills. I've never actually listened to them but Bill used to be in a band (Discount) with the singer, right?

Bill: Yeah.

Ryan: I just thought it would be cool to play



have Bill play. I don't know if you guys actually talk or get along or what?

Bill: Actually, I asked her to put us on the show but she never called me back.

Ryan: That sucks.

Bill: Whah, whah, whah, whah.

Ryan: I don't know if they have control over support bands.

Bill: She actually could care less but... it's hard.

Ryan: I thought it would be cool, I don't know. Like some weird reunion for Bill. In DC, we play with our friends all the fucking time.

Todd: If you really want to play Omaha, I know some bands.

Ryan: Yeah, like Todd's town is Omaha. Amanda and I are spoiled being from here... I'd love to play with Hot Snakes, though. That's just 'cause I know the bassist.

Amanda: I would love to. But in actuality, I just think it would be too intimidating. They're great.

Ryan: I love that band. I think Rick's lyrics are fucking amazing. They have this great energy. And Prince, too. A Routineers/Prince show would be amazing.

Sean: What current artists do you enjoy listening to?

Amanda: I just saw a local hip-hop band—Head-Roc. A really cool guy. Great DJ stuff. He is so dope, just really grassroots, down to earth. His music is so good.

Ryan: I'm been listening to M. Ward. I can't stop listening to one of his records. It's on constant rotation. That and Mark Lanegan. I'm also on a small Julianna Hatfield kick.

Amanda: I spend a lot of time in the past, just for listening. Because I work here at The Black Cat I see a show practically every night. Honestly, I'll listen to a Trio record, over and over again. All day long, same record. Then I will go and listen to something brand new from DC. I need to be able to clear it all out and then see what's happening. A friend of mine sent me a CD of band called Thunderbirds Are Power. Man, they are so good. Perhaps one of my favorite things about them is there's a girl singing. I personally have noticed that there's a weird aggression going on. There are not as many girls anymore. I don't see it happening as much. I don't see enough girls at shows, let alone getting up on stage.

Ryan: We have two girls in Beauty Pill. Your brother is always correcting me. "Don't say 'girls!'"

Amanda: I say "girls."

Ryan: I know. Now he's planted this thing in my fucking head!

Amanda: How about chicks, broads, babes, ladies?

Ryan: Basla, Beauty Pill's bassist, studied sociology. On tour she counted the women we played with. I swear there was a woman in every band. At least one woman in every band we played with on tour. I was actually like, "Man, things are headed in a really cool direction." I agree, it's definitely in regression. I do want more women in music.

Amanda: I have been steadily going to shows for half my life and this is the most like the early '80s than it ever has been. I've been to shows recently where I will stand behind the band and count individually how many women are in the audience. There won't be a girl for, like, four or five people back. All dudes. It's really weird. It's uncomfortable for me. Too many young white boys.

Ryan: A rodeo.

Amanda: Yeah, too much of a rodeo.

Sean: What's the origin of the band's name?

Amanda: The actual word came from me sitting right here at the bar of The Black Cat. After everything was closed and it was just staff, we were talking about people we know with severe drug problems. Somebody said, "Yeah, you know, they are like a total routineer (pronounced routine-ers)." I had never heard someone use that word before. I thought it



was kind of a cool concept. Not in the drug problem way, but in the methodical practicing. So then I actually loved it more and I called Ryan and I was spelling it out for him over the phone and he was like "oh route-in-neers?" I was like, "Route-in-neers, that's so much better!"

Sean: What are the future plans for The Routineers?

Ryan: We don't have any shows booked. We've been writing a lot of new stuff. I really, really want to finish our new batch of songs and record. That's pretty much all I want to do. We've been playing the same set for awhile.

Bill: I want to do the same thing, Ryan.

Ryan: I think that's what we're going to do for the next couple months.

Bill: We'll go out of town for some shows.

Todd: I think we're on a pretty good tear at each practice. Every practice there is something new popping up.

Ryan: We've got four or five songs done. They're just waiting for vocals. I never want vocals to be an afterthought. I'm so against that. But sometimes that just happens. I feel like I can hear when vocals are an afterthought, so I like to keep working on it right away.



this bike is a pipebomb

ted : drums, vocals

rymodee : guitar, harmonica, vocals

terry : bass, vocals

This Bike Is A Pipebomb are good folk. There are plenty of people who love to make music, who love to travel, love to meet new folks, love to talk about their passions, and daydream about their fancies. There are plenty of people who talk about all these things in a bar, around a campfire, on the couch, or in a café. They wait and they wait for the right time to make these ideas become a reality, and that time never seems to come. This Bike Is A Pipebomb is a rare group of folks who talk the talk and walk the walk. They make things happen, and chances are, if they verbalize the thought, they make the idea happen quickly.

I know this firsthand. Along with the original drummer Scott McDonald, I was an original member of This Bike Is A Pipebomb. Like the way most bands start, our small talk and our similar interests led us to play music in our

spare time. We got together a couple of times, had a good time and I figured it would be like most slacker bands I had played in—we will play some music, hopefully throw a set together, and maybe play a show or two around town. Rymo and Terry had much higher goals.

That was about ten years ago and it does not appear to me that TBIAPB is slowing down any. In fact, it seems like they are packing more and more steam over the years. I was in the band for the first year. We did more in that year than most bands do in ten years. I get tired thinking about what this Bike Is A Pipebomb must have done in ten years.

Like I said, Terry and Rymo make things happen.

interview by scott stanton : paintings by causey
pictures by saucecherry



Scott: When did This Bike Is A Pipebomb start?

Rymo: Well, I don't know exactly, I think it was like in what? '94? It was me, Terry, and these two guys named Scott. You being one of the Scotts, and Scott Macdonald, the drummer, being the other Scott. Terry had no idea how to play bass.

Scott: I can't remember exactly when the band started either, but yeah, Terry learned to play the bass quick.

Rymo: I was just playing folky country chords behind your very Devo sounds and it got pretty loud. It was a lot different than it is now. We brainstormed and came up with a name and a two-week tour in two weeks flat. I'm really proud of that. We would play places and people would say, "Hey, how long have you been together?" We'd say, "Oh, I don't know. Two or three weeks?" We get asked about our origin a lot for some reason.

Scott: I remember one of the very first things we did was pack ourselves and our equipment in a Gulf Power utility truck that Terry's mama owned and we traveled over to Mobile, Alabama. We played an open mic night show there. That was fun. Who's in This Bike Is A Pipebomb now?

Rymo: It's me, Teddy Ted, and Terry. We are from Pensacola Florida, but Ted has moved to the Bay Area of California. Me and Terry have been in the band for nine years. Teddy has been playing drums for us for around seven years. Before that, Terry and I were in This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb and it was a lot different than it is now. The old band broke up and Terry and I decided to do it differently, with more of a country feel. I guess me and Terry were really into old classic country at the time. We wanted to do something completely different, so we just started learning all my folk songs and we asked Dave Dondero to drum for us. It was immediately obvious that we weren't going to be as country as we thought we were, but we really enjoyed it, so we kept it up.

Ted: I used to not like the music too much, but when I finally figured out the lyrics and learned how to play the drums better, I start-

ed to love it. It is amazing to play to people all over the U.S. and get to talk to them about issues that affect us all and learn how things are where they live.

Terry: I want to say how much I love these two guys after all these years of being squeezed into a little metal box, or cab—front seat solidarity; those were the days—and learning to tour for the long haul. I think we've gone through everything together in such close quarters that it amazes me.

Scott: Country and folk music are a big influence on TBIAPB. What artists were you into?

Rymo: I was really into Johnny Cash, Hank Williams, Tom T. Hall, Loretta Lynn, as well as a lot of blues. Not just Memphis blues, but some of the blues singers who sang more folk songs or crooned, like Josh White, Leadbelly, Jesse Fuller, Sonny Terry, and Brownie McGhee.

amazing. Every day we'd just look at him sitting there in our van and say, "Whoaaa. That's Spot!" He means a lot to us and to the history of This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb and I still tell everyone that the first record is my very favorite because Spot plays on it. So many successes: three full length albums, solo records for Rymodee, great shows, even greater meals cooked for each other and friends we've made along the way, kids telling us exciting "Pipebomb" stories, being asked to play protests and actions all over the country that mean so much to us, art openings and art space openings and, unfortunately, art space closings like the 40th Street warehouse eviction party that we just played in San Francisco, leaving shows laughing at the fact that we were almost trampled, watching the DIY community flourish and expand. The thing that I am most proud of is the fact



The bottom line is our friendship.

Scott: What accomplishments with TBIAPB are you all most proud of?

Rymo: Just to see that people in states far away know all the words and are really glad we showed up to play their town. I really felt like we made a mark.

Terry: Highlights from the Pipe Bomb are definitely the Alaska tour, which was crazy and fun. Getting to play and tour with Spot (producer of early Bad Brains and Black Flag, among other accomplishments) was

that through it all we have not changed the way we do things. I can honestly say that it all means and feels the same as it did in the beginning—for all of us. We just played a back yard in Wyoming to six tall people and about seven or eight little tiny people and it was the funnest show of tour! We all still get so excited and it makes me love touring and playing and so much more.

Scott: What about accomplishments outside of the band?

Terry: As just a regular mortal, my proudest accomplishments have been making and keeping this wonderful circle of friends. Did you know that I can just pick up the phone anytime I want and call Replay Dave (Grabass Charelstons)? I am proud of Sluggo's (the venue that Terry's the proprietor of), of course, and its evolution over fifteen years changing and mutating along with me. I've met and worked with so many inspiring and talented folks in those years. I count myself lucky almost beyond belief. My crowning achievement is Grendel (Terry's dog). He is such a wonderful character—very handsome in his striped suit and if you've never met him, I encourage everyone to come to Florida and hang with him. Do make an appointment though... he keeps a very busy schedule.

Scott: You guys tour a lot and many people probably do not realize how much work goes

Baptist and actually dealt with that up to about age twenty-five or so. At times I really think there is a higher power, but I have a hard time believing in God.

Terry: I do have intense religious beliefs. However, they're not traditional and very personal and they involve the force of will, the human spirit and the power of punk rock. After all, it's called "folk" music. It's about power in numbers and the force of will that makes a man beat a machine and the never-ending spirit of strong individuals who are going to live their lives on their terms no matter what the cost. That is religion.

Scott: Punk rock, in one sense, is just another market of music created by a business that needed a label to sell a product. But it is obviously something very real to you and many other folks. What does punk rock mean to you?

tionalist that what we do is work, but it sure takes up a lot of our time and we do occasionally get paid for it.

Scott: Our society is warped on what work is or isn't and that is messed up. Damn, over the last nine years, you all have worked really hard, put more time, sweat, energy and passion into this band than a person who now has his own medical or law practice, and started med school the same time TBIAPB started. You all do work hard and it sounds like you all get great rewards for yourself. That's great.

Rymo: I guess Ted and Terry are the hardest workers. I have actually tried my whole life to work as little as possible. I have been a life-guard, burger flipper, fireman, soccer coach, soundman, cook, dishwasher, professional screen printer, but as far as touring, I think they usually go unfunded.

Scott: It's hard to find steady work when you

Keep it simple and honest. That is what I have learned through the windshield of our tour van.

into driving around the country playing music. It's hard work. It's not like a KISS lyric: "rock and roll all night and party every day."

Rymo: In an ideal world, labor and creativity go hand in hand.

Terry: We do tour a lot and have all made a lot of effort to rearrange our lives—I think they call that sacrifice to keep doing this. It is great fun and nothing is better than the feeling when we are playing live, all squeezed up together tight on the stage, just playing for each other and our friends who come to the shows, laughing at each other's mistakes and just plain having fun. The bottom line is our friendship. I love these two guys. They are my best friends and this is how we express our friendship. As an extension of that, we are friends because we share a lot of feelings and beliefs, have very similar lifestyles, and so we also get to express our shared beliefs and hopes for our community, this country, and the world even. We can also register our shared complaints.

Scott: Before the modern entertainment industry barged on us, music was mainly based around faith, religion, and church. Folk music is quite important to y'all. Is religion?

Rymo: I am not sure I believe in a higher power. I don't really like to talk about religion. As much as I don't like religion, I think it is still important for people to be able to believe in whatever they want.

Scott: I am just asking since music has such a strong tradition in religion.

Rymo: Religion is pretty important to me, but I'm not religious at all. I grew up a Southern

Terry: When I say punk rock, I am not speaking strictly about music at all. It's a general term I use when someone works so hard on something, anything—it could be art, it could be food, it could be a sewing project—for no reward at all except joy. I forgot about Hot Topic and "punk rock" being played on the radio now. That's outside of my realm. I am so pop culture illiterate that it's almost embarrassing. Maybe I'll just make up my own word, money be damned! In terms of a label for This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, I think that we are lucky to get to play with great punk bands, but we're also allowed to play on bills with acoustic acts or blue grass bands or whatever. The fact that we sort of straddle this fence makes our travels very interesting because the music that we get to enjoy every night on tour is so diverse. But these are all punk to me. We are part of that amazing community that allows you to travel. You know that you will always have a place to stay and someone will be there to offer food or let you cook food with them. You will play shows in their living room and dance while they play and laugh and probably sustain a head or knee injury at some point. Punk is a crappy old van held together with a pickle jar lid that you have to hobble to in the morning and drive to another show! We'll probably be doing this forever.

Scott: Many folk songs were written and sung to lighten the load or to take one's mind off the hard work they had. What laboring or jobs have you all done over the years to finance your tours or pay your bills?

Terry: It would be hard to convince the tradi-

tour a lot.

Rymo: I think if you don't thoroughly love your job, you should quit! This is ideally, though. Some people have to feed several mouths, you know, and not everyone is as lucky as I am. But, personally, I made a vow to not work at a job that I hated. Just think, eighty or probably ninety percent of Americans can't stand their fucking job. There's got to be something they'd rather do. A different job. Something they always wanted to do or wanted to learn. Work is important, it really is, but right now there are just too many people out there who'd do anything for a paycheck, and I can't be a part of that force right now.

Terry: I've been working since I was ten. I had a pretty lucrative lawn cutting business by the time I was twelve so I could buy school clothes and stuff. We were pretty poor. I feel lucky every day that I was instilled with such a strong work ethic because I believe a strong work ethic plus healthy creative streak equals I can do anything. We have toured for almost ten years and lived like kings—well, our idea of how a king would live—and Rymodee is part of a vegan coffee shop café. I have Sluggo's and Teddy is working with some folks in San Francisco to open an all ages show space there. We are superheroes.

Scott: Terry, what changes have you seen in the music industry since running a music club in the mid-1990s to now?

Terry: So many disappointments; watching music turn into a giant business that tricks people and destroys the true voice of inspira-

tion. We've watched so many of our friends get swallowed up. Kids shouldn't have to pay ten or fifteen dollars to see their favorite punk bands and CDs shouldn't cost twenty dollars. Let's face it, they only cost one dollar to make. It's utter robbery. We are not a part of that and never will be.

Scott: Well, giant business is not a new thing in the music business, but I guess it is a new thing that has crept into the "underground world" of music that we are involved in. CD costs are insane with no doubt, but I think when all costs are factored in from recording, to packaging, to production, to touring around to sell the CD, it costs a little more than one dollar. Five dollars for a touring band is a very fair price for everyone involved.

Terry: It's sad, but it has taught me much about the music business. Seeing things from this side for so long and knowing that it doesn't have to be lavish. Keep it simple and honest. That is what I have learned through the windshield of our tour van.

Scott: In 1959 and 1960 Alan Lomax returned to the South and recorded the traditions of our country. He recorded blues, ballads, hymns, reels, shouts, chanteys, and work songs. In that tradition, suppose you had to gather field recordings from the American South. In the spirit of Alan, where would you all go and who would you record for this project?

Rymo: Were you hoping I'd say he should record us or something? No, I don't think he'd be interested. There is some limited punk stuff that is interesting in that vein, that isn't just "fun" or "awesome," but is unheard and would be considered important in fifty years. I'd stay away from all the punk jug bands, probably. I don't know. Should I record people doing amazing new things, or doing renditions of folk songs they downloaded on the internet? I don't know if it would really be appreciated on a true folk circuit. It is not like it was before. Maybe I'd go to some small towns in Mississippi, like the delta, and record freestyle hip hop artists. That would be nice, to see the difference eighty to ninety years has made in the delta dance scene.

Scott: Well, I was not really thinking about you all, but why the heck not? Y'all are just plain folks playing songs for enjoyment and doing what you can to make it through the day. I think that is what I like most about those field recordings. The important thing is that it captured the feelings of these folks and the day they lived in. We all have a story to tell and some tell it through music. Tracy (Scott's wife) and I recorded some "old timer" relative folks in the Florida Panhandle area. We really wanted to capture some of their music and their talking before they die off. It was amazing! They just sat around at the end of the day, yelled out a key to play the tune in, and they would let loose with music and words.



Rymo: Man, I think about that a lot. There's nobody sharing songs they heard or writing anything in that style anymore. You can't go to prisons or small Mississippi towns with a tape recorder and hit paydirt. I think a lot of stuff is good on the streets, though, like some street performers and some one man bands. I think with the idea like Lomax, one would have to wait another thirty years and find some of the original hip hop guys from the late '70s and early '80s and record them or something. There's nothing much now.

Scott: Yeah, I agree completely. I would love to hear some of Grandmaster Flash's (Joseph Saddler) very first experiments with his turntables. Now that was truly groundbreaking and genius back in 1974! I wonder and I bet people thought he was a fool back then.

Terry: Alan Lomax would have a much bigger job today than before in terms of finding the roots music, protest music, and songs of freedom and oppression. He simply had to travel the Mississippi River delta to discover all those beautiful songs and players then. Now he would have to buy a Greyhound Ameripass and travel coast to coast to base-ments in Seattle and Portland and Kalamazoo,

and record stores in Denver and Gainesville, and collectives in St. Louis and Pittsburgh to find the songs of protest now. As the undercurrent of dissent for corporatization and the self-appointed presidential puppet and war and murder for oil grows and gets more vocal, punks and anarchists and every other form of radical are using music as a form of organizing and constituting their communities so their voices can be heard. As the gap between rich and poor gets wider so does the distance of Alan would have to travel.

Scott: Over the years, have you seen gender roles change in your scene?

Rymo: Oh, definitely. At least at a first glance, anyone looking in could see that more and more women are involved and that is really cool. But even deeper than that, women are in bands, in charge of distros, teaching classes, and making this whole thing a community instead of a bunch of dudes in bands.

Scott: Looking back over the years, I liked punk music and the scene because it seemed like it was open to anyone. There was something smart about it. It was nice to hear important topics addressed in a song rather than the stuff on the radio. But I look back and there

was no shortage of sexist, homophobic, and racist music that was tolerated in the punk rock scene. I can't believe some of the lyrics I would hear and I did not question it. I just figured they must be cool people writing and singing. I never thought, "Hey, these are rednecks in disguise wearing the punk rock uniform." I know things have gotten much better, but do you all see remainders or new breeds of these folks at your shows or in the scene?

Rymo: Not nearly as much as I used to. Not just in mainstream America, but even in the punk scene in the South, nobody was ever shocked or pissed off about homophobia or sexism. I think whenever you don't understand something, a lot of people's first reaction is to make fun of it, or even belittle it, and I think the punk scene has, for the most part anyway, jumped a lot of hurdles like that. There is always room for improvement, but I think we are definitely on the right path.

Scott: You all worked with Tim Kerr on your last album (*Three Way Tie for a Fifth*). The Big Boys are one of my all time favorite bands. How was it working with Tim Kerr?

Rymo: It was great hanging out with Tim Kerr. We never had anyone want to "produce" our record, and we weren't really sure what it meant, but it was pretty cool. We butted heads a couple of times, and it got pretty stressful. I can be pretty stubborn, especially when it comes to my songs. He's a really amazing guy,

side to it. The Pensacola high class have no idea that they are backwards rednecks.

Scott: Earlier, when we were talking about work, you all said something about your restaurants and cafes in Pensacola. Tell me about that.

Rymo: Actually, Terry and I each own separate vegan restaurants. Hers is Sluggo's which is also one of the main venues in town, and ours is End of the Line, which is also a coffee shop and small venue. It's really cool. When Terry first reopened Sluggo's, we were like, "Oh no, we're doomed! Two vegan restaurants in redneck Pensacola?," but it works really well. We all love each other's food and we're all good friends. We each have our own regular customers and a lot of people love both places. I get really excited just thinking that both of our places are doing well. It gets a little awkward at times, because our two places are kind of spread apart, and sometimes events or planned meals will overlap, but it always seems to work out and we are always excited about what the other restaurant is doing just as



in 1990 there wasn't much of that going on. I made some great friends who I am still very close to, to this day. The best thing that ever happened to me ever was I went out and bought a guitar. The military has a lot to do with my songwriting in that aspect alone. In a lot of my songs I try not to seem as though I have the answer, and sometimes I have had to come right out and say, you know, I made a mistake, too. We have a song about our friend who joined the navy and then the next thing you know he's a fighter pilot. Fuck. But, hey, I joined for the G.I. bill so I could go to college. All along, I knew the military was stupid and I could have been sent to a damn war or something.

Scott: Let's talk about the unusual touring vehicles you all have had.

Rymo: Our first vehicle was a van that broke down in the middle of Florida and we did the dumbest thing we ever did. We traded it in on a new van.

Scott: Lordy, I do remember that. That is one of those stories that I remember and think back and see how determined you all are. If I can, let me reflect. That was our first U.S. tour and it was going to be two months long. Anyhow, I remember our ol' Ford Econoline van named Midi that decided to quit just two days into that tour. I remember that like it was yesterday: sitting in the parking lot of a car lot at 12:30 AM in Vero Beach, FL. We were talking out our options and the idea of buying a new van came up. I thought, "Y'all can't be serious," and, "How in the heck would we pull that off?" Then Terry explained a five-year plan for the band and a plan to pay off the new van in that time. Five years flashed in front of my head and I just about had a panic

Punk is a crappy old van held together with a pickle jar lid that you have to hobble to in the morning and drive to another show!

and we're all really happy with the record.

Terry: Working with Tim Kerr was an honor and a pleasure. The man is about as sweet as key lime pie and helped us in the kindest but "No, I'm not kiddin'" kind of way. His house is a punk rock museum and he is also a great painter. (He painted the cover of that record.) Hey Scott, remember when we first met Tim Kerr? It was so long ago.

Scott: We met Tim way back? It's all a fog to me. I remember seeing and meeting him when he was in a band called Bad Mutha Goose back in my skateboarding days. He was tied in with Zorlac skateboards. It is a small world. Tell us about your, and my, good ol' hometown of Pensacola. Why is it unique?

Rymo: I think we have about three songs from Pensacola. Ted Bundy was caught here and there's a lot of albino squirrels. It's a small town, and you know there's not much going on here, but the people are nice and I love it. But like most towns, it has another side that is not so friendly. A very good ol' boy

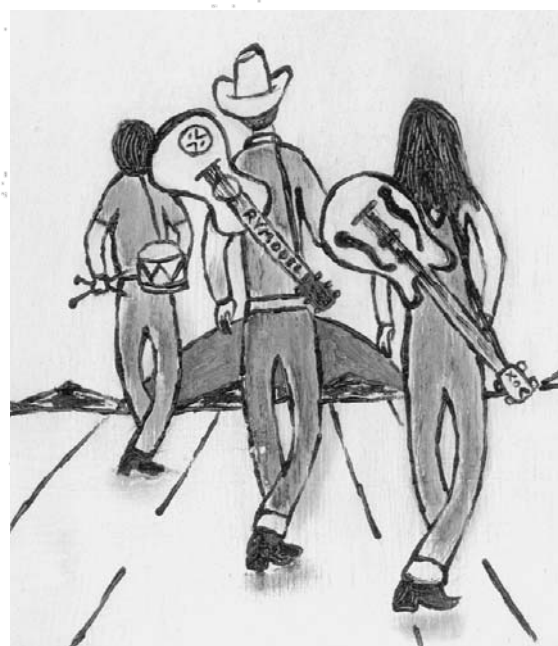
much as our own. It's really fucking sweet.

Scott: Let us know something we don't know and would not expect from you all?

Rymo: I served in the Air Force for two and a half years as a fireman.

Scott: You were in the Air Force? What is it with the armed forces and great country singers? I'm thinking about Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson, and Rymodee. Elvis wore the uniform as well. That is one extreme to the other for you; going from a point in life where you have to obey authority for honor and country, to a life of writing songs that fight authority and question your country. What does your military experience play in your song writing?

Rymo: Being in the military was probably one of the worst things to ever happen to me. It was really bad times and I was getting into a lot of trouble for my hair length and my childish attitude. But some great things happened to me too. I met some young kids in a punk band, and in Grand Forks, North Dakota



In an ideal world, labor and creativity should go hand in hand.

attack. Even though we had surpassed this idea months earlier, I was still in the frame of mind that this was just a spare time band. I remember it clearly. I said, "Count me out. I cannot pay for this. I can't even pay for a can of beans at this point." I felt like I was in deep. Well, we got that van somehow and that's just another story that proves that you all make things happen. Gosh, I remember us searching for a blood bank in Salt Lake City, so we could meet that month's van payments. That happened to be a tour that Ted did not go on. See what happens when Ted is not there? We had to get a van that wouldn't break down. Thank God for Ted! Hey Ted, you are quite the auto repairman. How do you keep those touring automobiles going and when did you learn that skill?

Ted: I think it's in my blood. When I was nine, I took my bike apart and my parents freaked out. I told them I just needed some part to put it back together. They humored me, and lo and behold, I put it back together. I guess then I realized forever I would fix the world one machine at a time. We have had a lot of busted-ass vans. As the band's mechanic I have had to fix many Dodges, two Fords—one mini and one full-sized—I fixed an '84 Chevy Impala taxi cab, The Ramen Cab, and I think some mini trucks and rental cars as well. My favorite was The Ramen Cab that our friend Skott gave to us when he moved to California. I rebuilt the transmission in my bedroom and we packed it full of our stuff and we piled into the front seat. That's where "front seat solidarity" came from.

Rymo: We toured in a van with a huge, ugly welded room on the back that looked like the space shuttle or Tennessee. We like to arrive in style and that van had a "Dixie" horn. Shit.

Scott: What was the seller of that van like?

Rymo: We were in kind of a bind, and like usual, it was about a week or two before tour and we didn't have a van. We were looking at RVs, trucks, classic old RVs, you name it. Terry was driving down some random street on the west side and saw this crazy looking beast of a van with a for sale sign on it and ran and told me. The owner was this old, retired navy man who just one day up and decided to weld an entire back room onto his already huge van. He was a vitamin salesman and right at the last minute after we paid for the van and hopped in, he tried to make us pray and we peeled out.

Scott: I know the origins of the touring taxi, but tell us about the Ramen Cab.

Rymo: Our friend Skott Cowgill obtained an old, used cab and got some professional lettering put on it that said Ramen Cab and he would give people rides for free or for ramen. He moved out to California and left the car to rot. A tour was about to happen in a week or two and Teddy decided he could fix up the cab, if only we could all sit in the front seat. Lots of people started weird rumors, and to this day there are a few people who think we actually paid a cabbie to drive us on tour with the meter running and stuff!

Scott: You all talked about doing a tour on bikes. You planned on carrying the amps and whatever else you would need on a bike-trailer attached to the bike. Have you all done this?

Rymo: Honestly, I can't imagine the band ever breaking up until we do that bike tour. At the time we thought of it, we had never heard of anyone doing a tour on their bikes, but there is a band called Bicycle and they have been

doing that for years. There was this band called Dead Things who have done it also. I still really, really want to do that.

Scott: What are some ups and downs of touring you all have faced?

Ted: Alaska was amazing. We brought Tate and Craig D with us. The van kept breaking down, so I stayed busy. I had to put a used transmission in at a lodge we played. I did this in the parking lot. As soon as I finished, we drove fifty hours straight to Elkford, Canada only to miss our show by half an hour. We woke up the next day and played to some kids at 10 AM. We've seen so much of America. We have seen lots of swimming holes and punk houses. We have seen the Grand Canyon, rooftops, junkyards, mountains. You get the picture.

Rymo: One of the biggest ups for me is we weren't very popular in our hometown but we would go to some odd, tiny town in the middle of nowhere and kids we never met were singing along to our songs. They were just really excited that we made it to their town. I could have stopped playing right then and there, you know. I think that's all I ever wanted. Probably the coolest thing that ever happened to us on tour was when we played an Indian reservation, we've played a few, but we played in Chinle, Arizona and went to their canyon instead of the Grand Canyon. It was called the Canyon de Chelly and these Navajo punks took us down there and told us all the legends of the Anasazi and all the history of the land.

Scott: Not many bands get that kind of experience.

Rymo: Some of the downers are the arguments you get into on the road with your best friends over the stupidest things.

Scott: What social concerns do you all address as a band?

Ted: Well, my biggest concern is the general public's ability to believe everything the media and the government tells them. I'm not saying we all need to revolt, but it's time we join in on the decision making in this country. Go to a city council meeting. Send letters to government officials about your concerns. Stop supporting media-controlling businesses. Basically, start doing what is right, not what you are told.

Rymo: A lot of young kids go to our shows, like fifteen to twenty-year-olds, but there are a lot of people our age, like thirty to forty. I honestly think the best thing I can offer them is letting them know that you can still do this and have fun. Do something different at our age, not that we're that old. The kids are always like, "Whoa, you could be our parents. That's so cool!"

Scott: What motivates you all to be in the band this long?

Ted: Touring Alaska.

Rymo: For me, it's all I can do. Plus it's what I wanted to do with my life when I was a kid. You know, just play dumb ass songs even when you're old and nobody cares anymore. I get pretty motivated by Terry and Ted. Really,

we are a pretty funny outfit. I like being around you guys.

Scott: We have talked about a culture close to our hearts. Care to take a poke at popular culture?

Rymo: Pop music is just a button to push, you know? I got a standard answer about pop music. It just sucks, and nobody wants it any different, instead of just figuring out how you yourself want it to be or how you could change it. I do get excited about pop culture every now and then. I think about movies that are about how sad everyone is and they don't even know it, like *Fight Club* or *American Beauty*. To me, they seem like they are trying to wake up Americans and I like that.

Scott: I think I know what you're saying. Yeah, take what you can get. But we are in sad state of affairs when we need a wake-up call from Hollywood.

Rymo: I know I just sound like an old, jaded guy all the time, but, seriously, nobody is interested in what happened in their own "scene" or culture or family or even their own town, like five, ten years ago. I bet the only scene left to "discover" America's new music would be stuff on subways, you know, people playing songs for spare change. You'll hear the best sounds like that.

Scott: I sometimes think the best music or

band is one I'll never hear. They're deep in the forest playing right now. I can't hear it, but that does not mean it's not being played.

Ted: I've recently realized that music works in cycles. As I get old, I hear the radio and say, "This shit sucks." Then I listen to the oldies station and realize, that old shit was just as dumb as the new shit. I think as the population grows there are just more people willing to listen to crap. The underground will always be the underground and in cycles it becomes pop. That way, us punks can always be bitter.

Scott: As of now, what music brings you joy?

Ted: Tough question. There are a lot of bands that we play with on the road. That is about the only new music I know. I'll just name a few: Carrie Nations, Allergic to Bullshit, Shotwell, The Bananas, Sexy, Grabass Charlestons, One Reason, the Visitations, the Can Kickers, o' Madeline, Japanther, R3, AC/DC, David Dondero...

Scott: Any final words?

Terry: If any one can book a show for us in Vermont, New Hampshire, or Hawaii. Those are the only states we haven't played.

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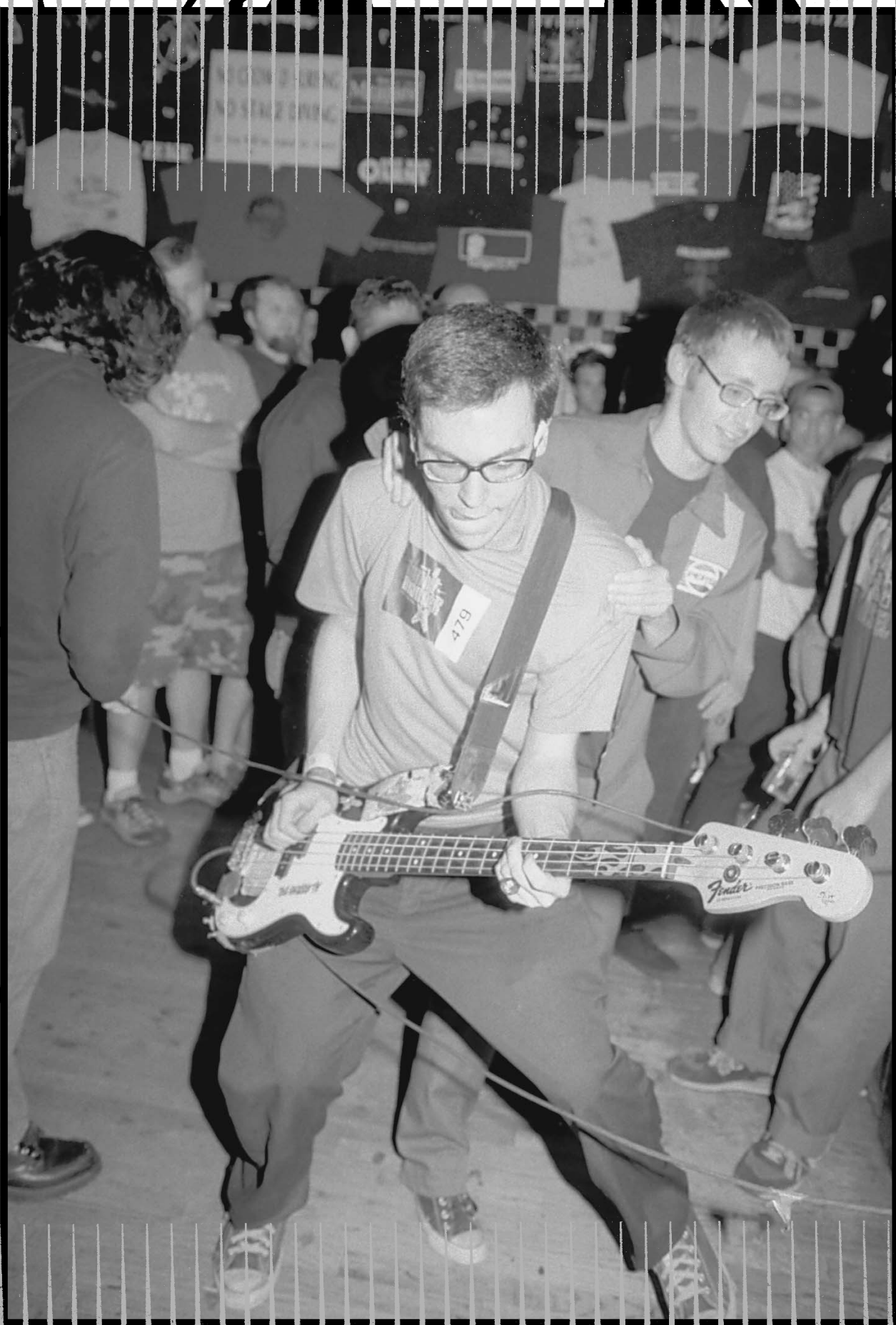
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THE OBSERVERS

IT WAS REALLY EASY FOR ME TO NOT WANT TO HAVE HEROES
BECAUSE ALL MY HEROES ARE TOTAL IDIOTS.

Do you ever notice the sky during the calm period before a storm? It's not raining or anything yet, but if you look off in the distance, you can see the dark clouds spilling towards you and you know you're in for some nasty weather. That's sort of what the Observers sound like: ominous, foreboding, and not necessarily confrontational, but just enough to set you on edge. They reflect a sentiment felt by many of us, a sense that the world is crumbling around us and that we might not be here tomorrow, but we still keep going, if for no other reason than to prove that we can. Between the ground-swelling rhythm section and the ethereal singing and guitar-playing, the desperation in their collective voice is rarely equaled in music. Their legend is forming as we speak; don't wait twenty years for some *American Hardcore* book to mythologize them. Participate.

Doug: vocals
Kashani: guitar
Colin: bass
Mike: drums

Interview by Josh
Photos by Megan Pants
and Todd Taylor

Josh: How many different bands are each of you in?

Mike: Why don't you give him the latest count, there, Colin?

Colin: I'm in eight bands.

Mike: Only eight?

Colin: Eight that have played out.

Mike: I'm in three at present.

Doug: Just one.

Kashani: Three.

Josh: Do you find it hard to be in so many bands, like you have to cancel an Observers show so Mike can go to Assisted Living Dracula practice?

Mike: Oh, I guess that's four bands. No, it's never been a problem. It's what I love doing, that's why I do it.

Josh: What do you get out of being in the Observers that you don't get out of the other bands?

Kashani: Nothing! [laughter]

Mike: This band tours more than any of my other bands, and I like that a lot.

Doug: Do you guys need me to leave the room and then you can answer?

Josh: Doug, why do you think it's unhealthy to have heroes?

Doug: I think that, too often, people will just end up emulating their heroes to the point where they just become cypriots or they put too much stock in what other people do. I kind of think that we're all the same, that we're all just people. I don't like when people worship a band or a person. For example, take a band like Social Distortion. So many people look up to Mike Ness, but there's really no difference between what he's done

and what they can do. There are all these people that will dress like him and try to act the way they think he acts or something like that, and you just end up getting a lot of people who aren't themselves and a lot of music that's already been done before.

Mike: If you're too caught up in what other people are doing, you're missing out on your own history.

Doug: [in funny voice] Just be yourself, man!

Kashani: I like to have heroes. I have many heroes, people who I like to fantasize about. The thing is, when I was younger, my two big heroes were Johnny Thunders and Indiana Jones. One is the big survivor, with the ball running after him and all that, and then Johnny Thunders is the anti-survivor, the kind of guy who's bent on self-destruction. So you have both sides.

Colin: It was really easy for me to not want to have heroes because all my heroes are total idiots. I'm a huge Misfits fan [laughter], and talking with Glenn Danzig for an hour would be the most horrific "let's do coke off a stripper's ta-ta's" conversation. I just don't want to talk to them. I like the music that they make, but it makes it easy to not want to talk to them.

Josh: Were you guys surprised at all by the response that you've gotten? The album sold out the first couple of pressings pretty quick. It made a lot of people's top ten lists at the end of the year...

Mike: Floored.

Colin: Absolutely.

Mike: Totally taken aback.

Colin: It's really weird, like that review that

Todd wrote. That was really flattering.

Doug: Obviously, I like the record. As far as the music goes, I'm happy with the album, but to get that sort of response is... I don't know the person who expects that. Who actually thinks, "I made this awesome record and I know everybody's going to rave about it and it's going to sell out." Who does that?

Josh: A lot of people do.

Doug: The sad thing is that they do. Yeah, it's pretty amazing.

Kashani: It's kind of like we just threw it together, it seems like. I put more effort into putting together a guitar demo in 1998. [laughter]

Doug: Just for the record, I don't feel like I threw it together.

Mike: "We didn't really put in any time or effort."

Doug: "Nobody worked on it."

Josh: Completely changing the subject, when was the last time a grown man shit his pants and showed it to you?

Mike: That would have to be in early February or late January in Austin, Texas, when a grown man did, in fact, shit his pants and showed it to me. Mr. Patrick Costello from the Dillinger Four and I were playing in a band in Austin, where we spent a large part of our time drinking and sitting around our friend Ben's living room. At one point, Paddy, as he put it, "Gambled on a fart and lost," and then decided to drop trou and display his... yeah.

Doug: I'm impressed.

Josh: Can you give me a rough estimate of how much beer and hamburger meat you guys went through?



HOW DO YOU GUYS AVOID BEING DOGMATIC?



I JUST THINK THAT'S FUNNY. AN AUTOMATIC DOG

Mike: We bought a ten-pound pack of hamburger meat that we thought was \$1.49 but was actually \$1.49 a pound [laughter], and then beer... twenty-five cases of Lone Star, give or take.

Josh: And that's in how much time?

Mike: Two weeks.

Josh: What makes you guys feel like you can't look yourselves in the face?

Doug: That song, "Lead Pill," that's about being at that stage in your life where you feel you're pretty much a complete failure at everything you try. The idea that maybe you've been on this course your whole life, where you're doomed to fail and everyone around you knew it but nobody's ever told you, so you've ended up going way past the point of no return and you realize, "Oh, wow, I'm never going to succeed at this thing," for whatever reason: character flaws or intelligence or whatever. That song's about that moment of just realizing that you've failed.

Josh: That's a pretty depressing follow-up to Paddy shitting his pants. [laughter] Colin, you're an interviewer?

Colin: Yes. I interview a host of people, really. It's also the same job that our friend Kashani holds and Doug once held, at a place called BN Research in Portland, Oregon. Surveys and focus groups, mainly.

Josh: About what?

Kashani: It's top secret.

Colin: A host of topics, really. [laughter]

Josh: Like, "Are you satisfied with the size of your penis?"

Colin: I am, but that's not what I ask them about. [laughter] Banfield Pet Hospital is our lead client. We survey their customers and see how satisfied they are. For example, "Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?"

Stuff like that.

Josh: If you could think back to high school and replace any book that you had to read with any book you want, what would it be?

Colin: I would take out *All's Quiet on the Western Front* and put in *Get in the Van*.

Josh: Why?

Colin: There's a whole different kind of war.

There's one that I'll have pretty much nothing to do with in my lifetime, but there's also one's that I definitely will. *All's Quiet*, I didn't get all the way through it, to be honest, but it's about life in the trenches and fighting a war whether you believe in it or not. I'm not ever really gonna go to war. I'd go to Canada first or something. I don't like it. I do like being in touring bands, and *Get in the Van* by Henry Rollins is this tour diary from being in Black Flag. It's okay to go crazy [laughter], it's okay to live off Snickers bars or live off nothing. You don't need anybody to survive in these situations. I didn't finish that one all the way, either. [laughter] I left it on a Greyhound somewhere between Los Angeles and Portland. If I had read it in high school...

Josh: Whoa.

Colin: Whole thing.

Doug: I don't know what I'd replace them with but I'd definitely get rid of all the Emily Brontë novels that I had to read, *Wuthering Heights* and all that crap. No time for that.

Kashani: There's this book that I wish I

would have read a lot earlier in my life. *Gravity's Rainbow*. It took me about a year to finish, like an eight hundred page novel or something, and it's all stream-of-consciousness. It was written by Thomas Pynchon. I was probably reading *Lord of the Flies* when I was fourteen, but if I had read *Gravity's Rainbow* when I was fourteen, I'd be a completely different prophet. I would have been awesome.

Josh: How do you think you would have been different?

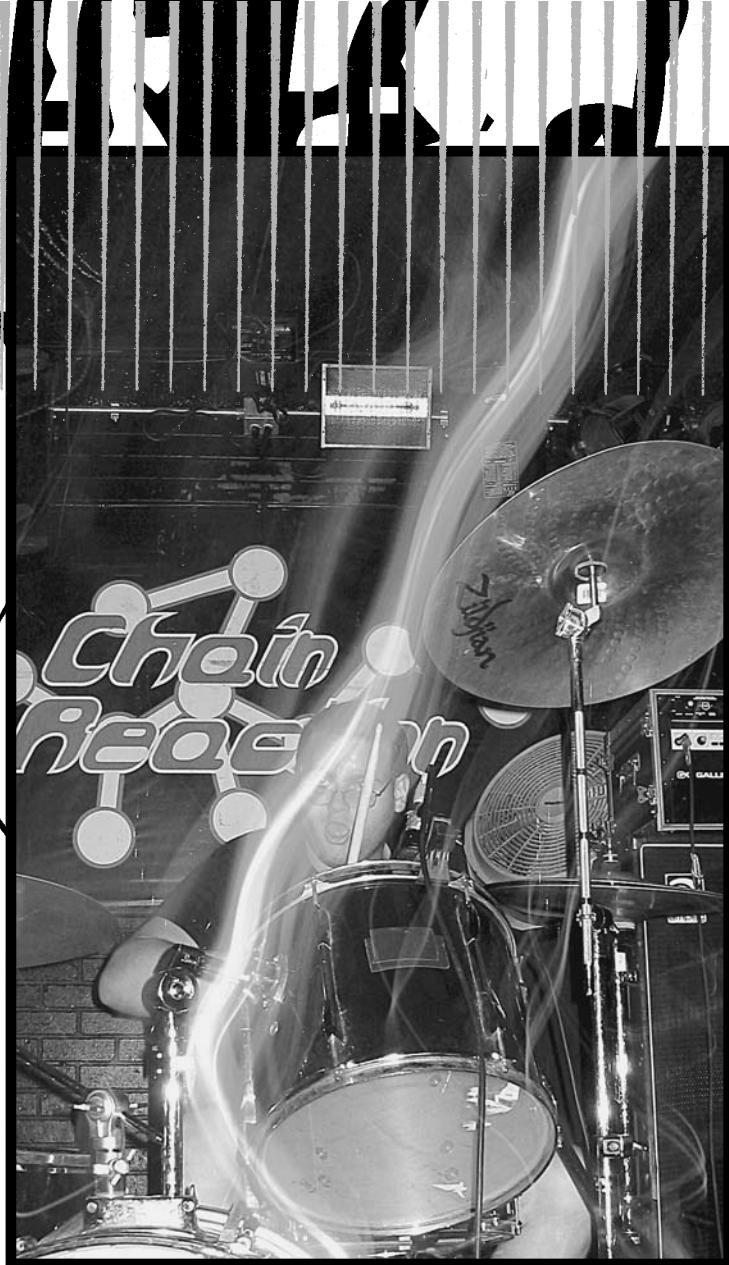
Kashani: I just think that the way my brain would have functioned would have been completely maneuvered and realigned. Think of my brain as an automobile. It would have been like a mechanic, a really good one.

Mike: How do you follow that up? I've never read a book.

Doug: Mike reads pornography.

Josh: So Mike, you hitchhiked from Arkansas to Texas?

Mike: Oklahoma. I went with my friend Lew and we hitchhiked from Oklahoma City



to Austin. It took us two days, five rides, and it was slow goings but no problems. I'm sure it was a funny sight, Lew and I in matching hoodless red sweatshirts, like crewneck sweatshirts, with our thumbs out. His said "The Ergs!" real big on the front and I just looked like a retard in mine. We really don't have as many shocking hitchhiking stories as one might think. Didn't have to felate any truckers.

Josh: Didn't have to...

Mike: No, all of them willfully.

Josh: In what ways have we been trivialized?

Doug: I like that idea of everything being oversimplified. Like by our government, for example, they want us to believe that everything's really black and white. Right now, with the wars that we're engaged in, it's sort of that whole thing where they're like, "Gotta get the evildoers. There's an axis of evil." And it's really simple like that. Our lives are being trivialized because we're the ones losing our lives over this really bullshit war on the idea of terror. That's what the song "Paralyzer" is about.

Mike: I didn't write the lyrics, but my take on a line like that is taking matters of life and death and reducing them to good and evil, these fictitious notions that don't have any bearing on our lives.

Doug: It's that whole idea of somebody like George Bush. To him, our lives are expendable for this thing that he's trying to do or for this money that he's trying to make.

Josh: What's the theme of the band?

Kashani: I want to say dementia.

Doug: There's a couple of themes that I'm going for. I like to think that we're a band that just focuses on the human experience. However, I think what happens a lot is that because many of the lyrics or general tone of the songs and artwork deal with depression and isolation, some people really get hung up on that and think of us as this really dark, depressing band, but I've never really felt like that. I think that's just the way everybody feels. The happiest people you know and the most depressed people you know have these feelings. Everybody has these feelings. It's just that not everybody talks about them. People hide it in different ways. With all the songs, I try to touch on everything—death, life, love, politics, and everything like that—things that everybody deals with on a day-to-day basis.

Mike: And chicks.

Doug: Chicks and babes. And drugs and rock-'n'-roll and party time.

Mike: And funny sunglasses.

Josh: What gives you guys hope?

Mike: Meeting like-minded people.

Doug: Yeah, where even if you feel like you're greatly outnumbered, just to know that there's at least a small underground. It's really nice touring a lot and in every town, you still meet all the same idiots that you have at home. Whether that's just your typical frat boy or...

Mike: Zinester...

Colin: People from Alabama who I don't really care for and think their glasses are kind of old hat...[laughter]

Doug: Yeah, even people in the punk rock scene, there's all these idiots, but then you meet these really awesome individuals in every town, too. That's what keeps us going and makes it worth it.

Mike: Finding people who are fighting the same fight, here and abroad.

Josh: How does growing old leave you nothing to believe in?

Colin: You love asking those questions, don't you?

Josh: You talk shit during bowling. This is what happens.

Doug: Payback!

Colin: Racist. [laughter]

Doug: That's a song about a relationship, a guy and a girl breaking up. Basically, they're breaking up because they found that they're getting older and the thrill is gone and they've grown apart. I could get more in detail but I don't know if I will. The idea of growing old leaving nothing to believe in... when you're younger, you're more optimistic about things. For example, with this particular relationship, right off the bat people were probably like, "That's not going to work because there's this obvious difference between the two people," but when they were at the beginning of it, they really believed that there was a way that it would work out. Then years into it, they're not as optimistic about it. They realize that there are big differences and it has to end.

Mike: Clearly hypothetical.

Colin: What was her name, Doug?

Doug: I will say this: it is not about me.

Josh: What impact has Portland had on the band. What does it offer that other cities might not?

Mike: I find it motivating. The music scene there is one of the best that I've ever encountered. Being a part of that is inspiration to do what we do as hard as we can.

Doug: There's just so many really inspiring bands to have come out of Portland in the last 5 years or so. There's a lot to draw from and it's a very diverse scene. One thing that I really like about Portland is that there aren't too many bands doing the same exact thing. It seems that about five to 7 years ago, a lot of people moved to Portland from other places, Texas, Idaho, Bellingham, all over the place. That's when a lot of cool bands formed made up of these people with such different backgrounds. Eventually, you got the Triggers, the Hunches, the Minds, the Diskords, Electric Eye, Plan R, The Riffs, Riot Cop, the Epoxies, and the Exploding Hearts, all playing the same shows or always playing with each other. That made Portland's scene so interesting, and I've definitely left out so many other bands, too.

Mike: Also, Portland has good doughnuts.



Doug: The weather's nice.

Josh: How do you guys think you avoid being dogmatic?

Mike: We just don't answer questions about our lyrics.

Kashani: I just think that's funny. An automatic dog.

Mike: It's not something that we consciously

SEEVERS



avoid, but it's not something that we've ever been accused of.

Doug: "Am I avoiding being dogmatic?"

Mike: Next question, please. God.

Josh: What's the strangest thing Doug's voice has ever been compared to?

Kashani: There was a live review that compared him to Shawn Stern of Youth Brigade.

Mike: I think it's the most accurate one. Most people in the band disagree.

Doug: I agree. There are similarities. Nothing against Shawn Stern or Youth Brigade, but I don't get that excited about that, because I hear it a lot and I'd rather not be compared to anyone, but I hear what they're saying. We have a similar range.

Mike: Also, some nutjob (Todd Taylor) referred to it as "nearly operatic."

Doug: Yeah, that was weird.

Kashani: There was a Morrissey comparison.

Doug: Morrissey and Danzig. I don't think I sound like either one at all. I just think I get compared to guys in punk bands who sing as opposed to yell.

Paul Roessler

*Interview by Ryan Leach and
Mor Fleisher
Pictures by Jenny Lens and
Rawl Power*

In 1978, The Screemers were the biggest punk band in Los Angeles. Through Bowie-like media manipulation, image, and intelligence, The Screemers built a following before they played a single note.

+ + +

Like The Germs, a combination of theatrics and superb songwriting made them the darlings of the original L.A. punk scene. Unlike The Germs, The Screemers never released a studio record, and so their legacy continues to live on in L.A. punk aficionados. Rough demos and live recordings surface periodically, testifying to just how formidable a band The Screemers were. The Screemers were truly original—the closest comparison being the minimalism and experimentation of The Velvet Underground combined with blaring keyboards and synthesizers. And that's just for one short period of the band's supernova existence.

The makeup of The Screemers was near perfect. In main songwriter and synthesizer player Tommy Gear, The Screemers gained sharp wit. Front man Tomata Du Plenty was absolutely mesmerizing, both vocally and visually. Drummer K.K. Barrett provided the minimalist beat needed to hold The Screemers together; and in keyboard player Paul Roessler, the band had one of the most talented musicians on the L.A. punk scene. And by 1981, they were gone. Not with a bang, but a whimper. Adding to their obscurity is their almost complete unaccountability: Tommy Gear simply disappeared off the music map; K.K. Barrett now has a successful career in the movie industry; and tragically, the beloved Du Plenty died of AIDS in 2000, leaving Roessler the only Screamer still active in music.

In the end, The Screemers' complete disregard for conformity and stagnation proved to be their unraveling. They did things on their own creative terms; both musically, The Screemers never had a guitarist or bassist; and in business, turning down multiple record deals. Unfortunately, these admirable attributes are not conducive to longevity, and without a proper record, The Screemers have been dealt a hard hand by time.

After The Screemers, Paul played with Nina Hagen. He's released several solo albums, and

continues to play with Hagen and Mike Watt (Minutemen, FIREHOSE). When not busy touring, Paul can be found producing and recording (on the day of this interview, he was putting the final touches on some Josie Cotton songs). A complete listing of all the bands Paul has been in would fill a phone book, but it's The Screemers he's most remembered for, and for good reason. To paraphrase Jello Biafra, "The Screemers were the greatest band never signed." Paul is very amiable, intelligent and is a big proponent of staying drug-free; he's currently in school to become a drug counselor. Much respect. —Ryan

Ryan: How did you and your family end up living in the Caribbean?

Paul: Well, I was eleven and Kira was eight. My dad was the head of the computer center at Yale University. It was an intense lifestyle and I guess he sort of fulfilled a dream. I always suspected that there was some dark secret involved in that, but the way it was proposed to us was, "Oh, I'm just following my dreams of being an underwater photographer in the Caribbean." My parents got divorced about five years after that, so there was probably some kind of trouble in paradise. There could have been some friction between my parents that they thought that was going to cure.

Ryan: Is that where you got into reggae music?

Paul: You seem to have some misplaced idea that I'm crazy about reggae music.

Ryan: You did have dreadlocks for awhile.

Paul: Dreadlocks never really meant reggae music. What happened with reggae music was after The Screemers broke up, I started playing with Nina Hagen and she had dreadlocks. I had never seen dreadlocks and I looked at her and went, "Oh my god, your hair is so cool. What the fuck did you do to it?" When we moved to New York I was playing with her and we went and saw some cool movies. We saw *The Harder They Come* and *Rockers*. These were

cool Rastafari movies where the Rastafaris are portrayed as these saintly, in-the-woods, pot smoking guys and marijuana was really important to me at the time. I really related to it. I met a bunch of Rastas there, but when I started reading about the religion behind it and hanging out with them, I realized that there were some things with the Rastas that were hard for me to swallow. I thought that there was an intense misogyny that went on, and any kind of dogmatic religion is hard for me to swallow. I liked that they were rebels and the way they were portrayed in the movies; that they have some kind of spiritual wisdom that they backed up with machine guns. Dreadlocks meant something different, though. I'm willing to talk about dreadlocks because I had them for so long—like twenty-five years. There are these ladies getting \$600 haircuts and I think it looks horrible. It just seemed like such conspicuous consumption. So I had hair that I didn't do anything to, and it's a big "fuck you" to society.

Ryan: What were you into before punk hit?

Paul: My dad was into classical music when I was really little. I remember listening to Wagner and Harry Patch. My mom liked folk music. When I was six they got me all the Peter, Paul and Mary records. For a long time I thought that was cheesy until I learned that Peter, Paul and Mary are a commercialized version of very deep-rooted folk music. Actually, I think that helped me develop a sense of melody and an appreciation of folk music that bounced off the classical music my Dad listened to. Peter, Paul and Mary did a lot of Bob Dylan songs. I remember being seven years old and looking at their records and going, "Wow, all my favorite songs are written by B. Dylan!" And then I got into Bob Dylan. I also had an uncle who would give me a record on my birthday and Christmas. He gave me The Band, *Deja Vu* and *Sgt. Peppers*. I really loved Frank Zappa. I was taking piano lessons from the time I was eight, so as my musical skills progressed,

I went through this immature phase where I wanted complexity. Being a keyboard player, I got into Yes and ELP.

Ryan: And that's what led to Arc Squared?

Paul: Yeah, I was in a prog phase at about sixteen. We lived in the Bay Area for a couple of years after the Caribbean. My parents got divorced and we moved to L.A. I didn't know anybody when we moved out to Los Angeles. I started smoking a lot of pot and listening to a lot of prog rock. I met some guys in jazz band at school who had an Alice Cooper cover band. That band broke up and they said they wanted to do an originals band. So I started composing for that band and I wrote a concept album. Usually, people are just stoned and say they want to write a concept album, but I actually went and wrote one. I'm kind of proud of it. I was sixteen and I spent the next couple of years trying to get people to learn how to play it. People would try and lose their minds.

Mor: How did you get into punk rock from prog rock?

Paul: David Bowie. While I was working on Arc Squared I went to this special school called IPS and I met Paul Beahm, who later became Darby Crash of The Germs. We became really good friends. I was already friends with Will Matta, who wrote for *Slash*, and I met Pat Smear, too. There was a whole clique of us. Darby was a Bowie freak. People told me, "Don't talk to him. He'll brainwash you." Darby was really into mind control and feeding people acid. He was kind of twisting people up a little bit. I immediately thought he was a really interesting person and that there was something vulnerable and endearing to him underneath the surface of complete megalomania and hostility. But I think Darby was impressed that I did Arc Squared. It really wasn't his cup of tea, but he never insulted me about it.

To introduce myself to him I went [in goon voice], "Oh, so I hear you're really into Bowie." And he was so vicious. Then I asked him if he liked The Rolling Stones and he goes [in patronizing voice], "Oh, yeah, Mick Jagger's really cool!" And he laughed at me, because at that point Mick Jagger wasn't cool anymore. Darby was really impressive in how vicious and cunning he was. I followed him around and talked to him. Then I went to a punk show where The Deadbeats and The Germs were playing—Darby had invited us. The Deadbeats were this prog/punk band, so it really spoke to me. The Germs were this incredibly advanced, complicated theatre piece where the music was so secondary, but it was something that you hadn't seen before. In high school, Paul Beahm was the new thing. The Germs would go onstage and it didn't matter what they did. I never saw a band get on stage and their goal was to start a riot. With the Germs it was like, "We're up here, but the audience is important, too. I'm going to talk to the audience and ask that guy if I can have his pin and ask him to get me a beer. And my friend Melissa is over there, so I'll yell to her." Everything that was going on in the room was part of it, and it was new and modern. Darby was fully developed at twenty. I'm still evolving and changing. That's why there is still this legend about him—to the people he knew, he touched them. There was something weird about him.

Ryan: Being a classically trained pianist, did you have any reservations about what role you could play in the punk scene?

Paul: Probably a little bit. I remember reading a *Slash* article—it was an interview with Charlotte Caffey (Go-Go's)—and she said that she started out playing classical piano. I had a big crush on her! And then I started playing drums. I had a feeling



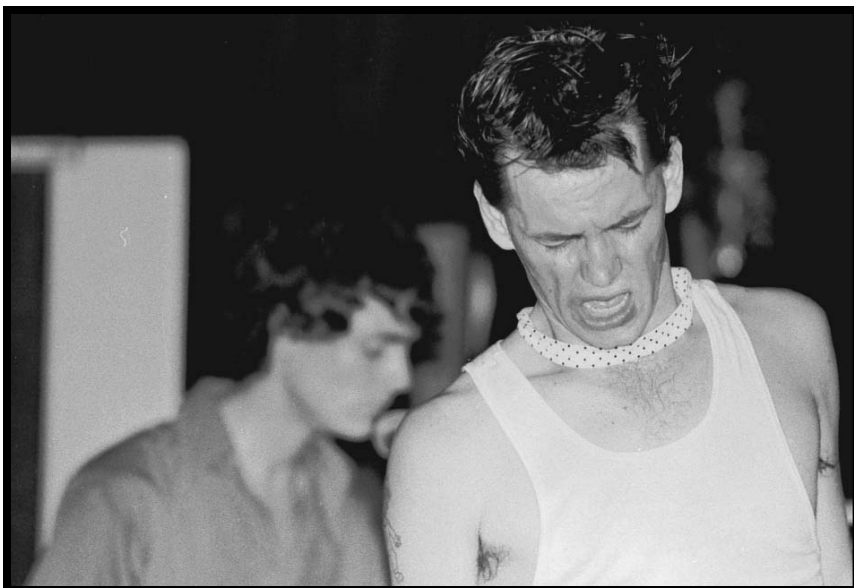
Top: Paul today, in the Secondmen

Above: The Screemers, 1978

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The Screamers, 1978
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I would do things like take a street sign with pickups attached to it and roll dice on it and play it through a fuzz box. + + +

that it would come around. As important and influential as punk rock was on me, I knew nothing stays the same. And then four months later, The Screamers happened. I knew keyboards wouldn't be gone forever.

Ryan: Was it the theatrics or the music of The Screamers that interested you the most?

Paul: Well, the amazing thing about The Germs is if they did all that theatre stuff and they sucked, they wouldn't have had any staying power. The Germs lyrics I can really ponder. "I'm a Lexicon Devil with a battered brain." And what's a Lexicon Devil? It's a Devil of words. And Pat was a great, talented, brilliant musician. He wrote great chord progressions. The Screamers also had really good songs. Songs like "Better World" and "Eva Braun." "Eva Braun" was such a super simple song. And "Vertigo," which is the silliest pop song. I liked their heavier songs. Stuff like "Going Steady with Twiggy" I really couldn't get into. As I talk about it, The Screamers and The Germs were not songwriters or musicians; they were performance artists that became musicians for a very short period of time. That's why The Germs and The Screamers might have never been able to make a second album. They were a one shot thing. The Screamers said we don't want to make records, we want to make movies. And Darby goes, "I'm dead now. I said what I have to say and I meant it. I wasn't lying."

So anyway, The Screamers' music and theatrics were great. The Screamers were so new and it was such a complete package: their look to the way they moved. I watched them do an interview when I was sort of on probation in the

beginning—I was the hired guy for the first six months—and they did an interview with *Flipside* and Tommy Gear just shredded their questions: "Is that really what you want to know?" "Is that what your readership really wants to read about?" It just became a really hostile situation. It was incredible. Tommy had this real hostility and Tomata was a sweet person. K.K. was more of a livewire, a really edgy guy. There was a lot of talent in that band. And their first keyboard player, David Browne, I didn't get the final story about how they split, but he was amazing. I was really young. I was eighteen or nineteen, and those guys were twenty-five or twenty-six, and Tomata was thirty, and they were smart as fuck. They had enough life experience to just shut me down. I could never hold up my end in an argument. I was the kid and if I decided that I wanted to stand up to The Screamers as an equal, I would fail. I would embarrass myself. I could play great. I could play circles around any of them, which made me valuable. I was aggressive. I'm not totally dumb, as I look back on it, but I didn't feel a strong confidence.

They had an idea of what it was to be a Screamer. It is a very interesting concept. In terms of art, what does that fall under? You're not creating an identity, but a group identity. And that group identity is in all aspects of your life. It was like The Beatles. When I was growing up, I thought The Beatles all lived in one house. And they slept in the same bed—this was before I knew what sex was. The illusion was that they were a family. The Germs and The Screamers bought into it. The Screamers were very informed by advertising, persona and

image, which comes from post-modernism, Bowie, and Andy Warhol. They controlled how people saw them. And Darby got a lot of his information from Scientology and philosophy. If your band is being controlled by you through advertising, you have a hold on your public persona. That's something that is very direct. Tommy was really influenced by a book called *Winning through Intimidation*, which is a business book. If your band is a business entity controlled through intimidation, that's a very sharp arrow pointing at the public. And Darby had this thing about, "Oh, I'm going to kill myself, so everything I do will be colored later. And when I die, if nobody likes me now, I'm going to construct just the right story so when I die it's like, 'Fuck.'"

Ryan: Did you have any inkling that he was going to kill himself?

Paul: Oh, he said he was going to kill himself.

Ryan: Did you actually believe him?

Paul: You never believe that. I knew he was different. I don't know if he knew it. I think you can look back and go, "Oh, he knew he was going to kill himself." Maybe it's not that he knew consciously that he was going to kill himself, he was always going to kill himself. And he had moments where he knew it. With a person like that, you always hope that something will happen. Someone will reach him. Someone will turn him around. He was too smart. He had a 180 IQ. When the mind is sick and damaged, a 180 IQ erects defenses to protect the damage and the wound. Intelligence doesn't alleviate unless you decide, "I'm going to live and turn my intelligence on myself and get the answer to this. I'm going to find out

what is wrong with me and I will survive.” With people like Kurt Cobain and Darby, their intelligence has decided that the world is fucked and it makes sense that, to them, that they feel this way. And they are going to prove that the world is wrong. And they’re way too smart to talk about it. It’s tragic. I’ve known a handful of them.

Mor: What did you think of The Screamers wanting to make a movie instead of a record?

Paul: With all theories you wind up with the results. For instance, Marxism: it’s a great theory but its results are questionable. So The Screamers had this idea and it made them disappear off of the face of the earth. And the movie is not watchable. I have some bitterness about it. The Screamers made a couple of weird changes. The Screamers were a minimalist punk rock band until ’78. In early ’79, they decided that they were going to play to tapes, incorporate two violinists, have another singer come out in the middle and drastically alter what they were doing. Now, it still kind of worked. We were doing songs like “Scream” and “Why the World.” These songs were a lit-

Paul: Interesting. It’s really cool to talk about Tommy Gear because Tommy Gear is one of the smartest and most impressive people ever. He was just so amazing. He would walk into a room and just take it over. When the band broke up, he lost that; it went away. I don’t know whether he was just sad or devastated. I don’t ever want to judge because I don’t fully understand what happened. But I do know that when I was working with him he had so many influences and ideas. Tommy’s mind was so keen and he was a beautifully looking man—just the complete package. He was a really impressive guy. Some of these people off themselves or just disappear off of the face of the earth.

Ryan: You were in two (The Screamers and Nervous Gender) of the very few early L.A. punk bands with openly gay members. Did these bands receive any homophobic threats?

Paul: Well, I don’t remember that being a problem. I think you had pretty informed audiences in the early L.A. punk scene. I didn’t play with Nervous Gender over the whole span of their career. There might have been shows later on where they had to deal with that—where

pickups attached to it and roll dice on it and play it through a fuzz box. Eventually everything sounded like it was rolling down hill and it was very fast.

Ryan: You were a member of 45 Grave. What are your memories of the late Rob Ritter?

Paul: Interesting. I’ve learned a lot about myself and a lot about people since then. My opinions of Rob Ritter always change. I was so against heroin. He was the first person I saw that without heroin he was so miserable and so depressed that I started thinking, “Why should a person go through a long life being so miserable and so depressed? He should just go ahead and be a junkie.” Because it seemed like he was so happy when he was on dope. He would always be lit up and smiling and all cool when he was on heroin. And then he died. And for awhile that was my philosophy—if you’re so damaged that you’re miserable all the time, fix yourself and live happy as long as you can. But I don’t buy that anymore because I know that what he was feeling could have been addressed. Even someone like Darby; anybody can be reached, and nobody has to die and be miser-

Usually, people are just stoned and say they want to write a concept album, but I actually went and wrote one.



tle bit more dance oriented. The Screamers refused to stay the same. You gotta take your hats off to a band that will go the extra nine yards, because it’s easy to plug in your guitars and play your hits. And it is a pain in the ass to do all this extra stuff. So that was their philosophy. They kept doing it until it toppled. I have nothing but respect for them. My parents taught me it was better to be average on the best team than the best on the bad team. I have nothing but respect for them trying to do that. They paid a really big price for being ambitious—not in a bad way—but in an artistic, brave, courageous and not lazy way. That movie is Rene Daalder’s movie. You don’t see Tommy and Tomata’s movie. I think Rene Daalder could have made his fucking movie and The Screamers could have been The Screamers.

Mor: Where is Tommy?

Paul: He’s in Los Angeles. He doesn’t really like to talk about this stuff. I think he went on with his life. I’m a musician. I became committed to music when I was eleven. And that was a love that never went away. If I’m not doing music I feel anxious and depressed. That’s not Tommy. I think Tommy studied medicine. He did some serious school stuff. I hesitate to say he’s bitter. I hesitate to say he has regrets. I don’t know. I think it’s possible that he’s totally fine with the whole thing. And Tommy being a rock star was not really what he had in mind.

Ryan: It’s odd because he’s unaccounted for.

punkers and idiots were coming out. But I will say that when you were standing in front of Nervous Gender, you did not want to fuck with them. Whether they were gay or not, they were so intense that if you didn’t like them, you left. You did not want to confront those guys. And that’s what was neat about them—they were scary. So, no, but that could have happened later. The initial punk scene was mostly artists.

Mor: Speaking of Nervous Gender, what was it like playing with an eight-year-old drummer?

Paul: You have to accept the things you cannot change and change the things you can. He wasn’t a particularly talented drummer. What happened was I had to invent a new theory of rhythm and I named it the avalanche theory; that if music is fast enough you can’t really tell what the beat is. So the music would sound just flutter. He would just go, “bop, bop, bop, bop.” For anyone that never heard Nervous Gender, they were playing early synths that were not hooked up to each other. So there were all these modulations going on, nothing was linked. Already you have the three synths pulsing wrong and they couldn’t play them that well, either. A band like Kraftwerk will have all the synthesizers linked together so the music is played in unison.

Ryan: So it was out of key and tempo?

Paul: Yeah, and tempo. I don’t know if they got out of key, but pitch wasn’t that important. I would do things like take a street sign with

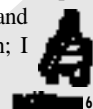
able forever. Rob was really depressed. He had depression and they didn’t know how to treat it back then. He could have been treated.

Mor: How did 45 Grave’s “Party Time” make it onto *Return of the Living Dead*?

Paul: We did a single with a metal producer—the same guy who did X’s *Wild Thing*—Michael Wagner, and when punk bands were trying to sell out and get a big hit, they would go to him. With 45 Grave there was some of that going on. 45 Grave was such a life-on-the-edge band, like if some money wasn’t going to be made, people were going to kill each other, or hate each other. “Party Time” was a punk song and they made it a metal song. I think 45 Grave were on Enigma at the time and I think the label gave that song to the director of the movie. The skull pops up and the goes, “Do you wanna party?” I think The Beastie Boys ripped that off. It’s really close.

Mor: What got you into producing?

Paul: I don’t really like playing live that much. I really love recording. From the time I was nineteen, I would get a hold of 4-tracks. So every 4-track I had I would rig together. I started working with other people, and it was fun. When I was thirteen, I was compulsive to write songs. It became compulsive to record them at twenty-two. But I like to work with other people, too. I like what they’re saying and I like almost everyone I work with; I meld with them.

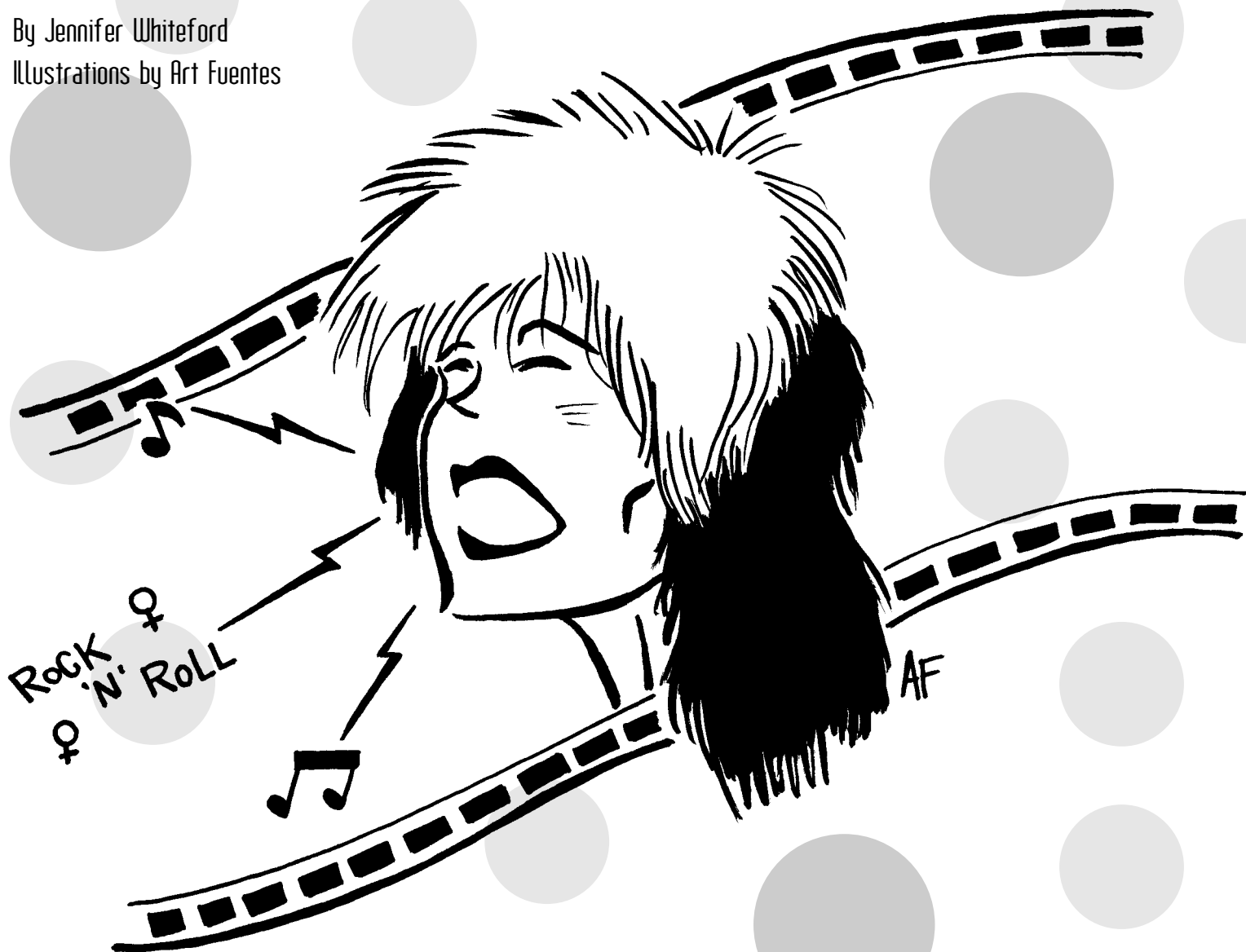


Overlooked and Underrated:

ALL GIRL BANDS on the BIG SCREEN

By Jennifer Whiteford

Illustrations by Art Fuentes



PROLOGUE

For five long and crazy years I was the lead singer and guitarist in an all-girl punk band. We started in a classic girl band way: two of us knew how to play guitar, one of us had played drums seven years earlier, and one of us had never picked up a bass in her life. At our first practice in our drummer Misse's basement, we played covers of Cub songs very slowly and very badly.

Somehow within a few months, we managed to learn to play faster, write our own songs, buy larger amps and make it to practice once a week. We moved our gear up to the attic, put some Bikini Kill posters on the walls, and the rest is history.

We may have been a band for five years, but our honeymoon period ended quickly. We spent a lot of our time in the attic fighting, manipulating, sighing, and rolling our eyes. Who was going to borrow a car so we could drive our gear to our next show? Who made all the posters and put them up all over town while no one else lifted a fin-

ger? Why don't the two of you want to go on tour? What do you mean that vocal part sounds out of tune?

What kept us going in the midst of all that grumpiness were the flashes of greatness that would occasionally come along. Like the first time we played a show where people in the audience called out the names of songs they wanted to hear. Or our big show in New York City where we played better than we'd ever played before. And then there was the fact that we were one of the only all-girl bands in our city. There were girls who told us that seeing us made them want to play

music too, and you'd have to be crazy to break up a band after someone tells you something like that. Being in an all-girl band began to feel like a monumental accomplishment.

But even with all their greatness, all-female bands are often fraught with, in one overused word, *drama*. By the time my band finally broke up—during an emotional attic practice where we all sat on the wooden floorboards and cried—I had truly had my fill of girl band drama. I sold my amp and put my guitar away. I honestly did not want to play music ever again.

Slowly, though, I began to miss the band. I missed the camaraderie and the sheer coolness of it all, of being The Girl in the Band. It was like being a part of a secret society. A very whiney, frustrating secret society. But I'm a writer, really, not a musician. I like to appreciate drama from the outside. So I turned to the movies.

Movies featuring girl rock bands are few and far between. Like many all-girl bands themselves, these films are often overlooked and underrated. To find them requires a bit of searching or a lot of dumb luck. Once found, though, they are undoubtedly entertaining. How could they not be? Many all-girl bands seem to stand perfectly on the tightrope between power and disaster. The bands in these movies are always on the verge of something great, and are always dogged by either their own internal calamity, or forces beyond their control willing them to fail. The tension this creates will usually make for a compelling story.

To that end, I've selected six of the most poignant girl rock films that I've had the privilege to lay my eyes on. Within these six movies, you'll find teenage girl rockers and forty-something lady rockers, big budget films and low, low, low budget films, girls who rock and girls who dream of rocking, and, of course, lots and lots of drama.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,
THE FABULOUS STAINS**
(PARAMOUNT 1982)

This film's title is said to be a jab at the documentary, *Ladies and Gentlemen: The Rolling Stones*, which is an accurate begin-

ning for a film chock full of raw, pissed-off, teen girl attitude. *Ladies and Gentlemen, the Fabulous Stains* tells the story of Corrine Burns (played by a fifteen-year-old Diane Lane) an orphaned teenager who we first see griping to TV news cameras about her desire for an adventurous life that can not be found in boring small town America. Corrine's band, The Stains, formed with a cousin and a mutual friend, has had only one practice when they luck into a spot on a doomed cross-country tour featuring established punk band The Looters. Fans of punk rock will want to see this movie if only for the footage of The Looters whose on-screen players include the Sex Pistols' Paul Cook and Steve Jones, as well as Paul Simonon of The Clash.

Corrine appears for her first gig wearing fishnet stockings, see-through clothing, and with her hair dyed into black and white skunk-like stripes. When the Stains fail to wow the crowd with their amateurish playing and general lack of confidence, Corrine takes it out on the crowd in a tirade, culminating with the statement that will become the Stains motto: "We don't put out!"

The Stains popularity explodes seemingly overnight, egged on by the reports from local news teams and the legions of young girls who emulate Corrine's hair, clothing, and attitude. As with many stories of meteoric rises to fame, the Stains are soon plagued by infighting, egos, and crooked management, all which contribute to their eventual downfall.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Fabulous Stains is often heralded as a precursor to what became the Riot Grrrl movement. The Stains' attitudes, youth, and unconventional fashion choices certainly call to mind the obstinate girls in babydoll dresses who enjoyed a flash of media attention in the early nineties. Feminists whose Riot Grrrl hangover has since worn off will likely not find this film particularly feminist, due to the fact that, in spite of Corrine's brave behavior, all the power lies with the men who consistently manipulate the Stains. In 1982, however, the film was seen as so controversial that it was never properly released after its gutsy heroines made studio officials nervous.

**DESPERATE TEENAGE
LOVEDOLLS**
(ECLECTIC 1984)

Desperate Teenage Lovedolls falls into the category of the "so bad, it's good" movie, which is likely why it's often referred to as a cult classic. Made for \$250.00 on grainy, Super 8 film, this sixty-minute train wreck of a movie tells the story of three teenage runaways who form a band, rocket to stardom, and then, predictably, plummet into poverty and failure. Shot in Los Angeles, this movie frantically tackles every stereotype of the sleazy music industry it can dredge up.

In the early stages of the film, lead singer Kitty grows tired of her shrieking, intolerant mother and subsequently hits the streets of Hollywood as a runaway with her pal Bunny. They get high, steal guitars, and eventually, inexplicably, kill Kitty's mom. From that episode stems this choice dialogue:

"Thanks for killing my mom."

"Hey, no problem."

Personally, I was taken by the fact that the Lovedolls have a rival girl band called the She Devils, led by the pouty and brilliantly named Tanya Hearst. The She Devils are never actually shown playing any instruments, but they do get to participate in a couple of the movie's many murders.

My own band, truth be told, had a rival all-girl band. They were a bunch of bad-ass lady punks, complete with a guitarist who drove around wasted in her convertible Miata, and a bassist who made late-night threatening phone calls to our own bassist about a variety of issues. (The rival band subplot in *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls* doesn't really reach its full potential, so for that you may have to watch some old Jem and the Holograms cartoons to see the Holograms tangle with their perfectly evil rival all-girl band named—I'm not kidding—The Misfits).

Desperate Teenage Lovedolls is more about spectacle than entertainment or empowerment. It plunges into tedium at several points and its jumpy plot and horrid acting are only amusing for so long. The movie rolls out stereotype after stereotype until viewers are forced to see its ridiculousness as part of its charm. This is worth seeing only

THE POWER OF THE ALL-FEMALE BAND
ALWAYS SEEMS TO GO HAND IN HAND
WITH POTENTIAL DISASTER.

GREAT MUSIC, HAIR PULLING, ARGUMENTS ABOUT TAMPONS, SLEAZY ROCK BOYS, DRUNKEN PARTIES, AND A LITTLE BIT OF DEATH.

for its cult status, unless grainy, choppy, perplexing movies are your kind of thing. The film did eventually enjoy a sequel titled *Lovedoll Superstars*, which I haven't been able to get a hold of. Judging from the trailer that follows my copy of *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls*, however, it looks like the viewer is in for more of the same.

ALL OVER ME (Image Entertainment 1997)

While this movie doesn't chronicle the ups and downs of a specific girl band, it so brilliantly depicts the musical awakening of its main character, it had to make the list. *All Over Me* serves as a kind of a prologue to the other movies on my list, and Claude, the protagonist, embodies all the wide-eyed wonder that comes with the first realization that *girls can play music!* Together! While other girls watch!

Claude is an almost-out-of-the-closet rock'n'roll lesbian teenager. Through most of the movie she looks profoundly uncomfortable in her own skin. Her only solace comes from music (posters of Patti Smith and Helium adorn her bedroom walls) and from a one-sided love affair with her clueless best friend, Ellen. Things go rapidly downhill when Ellen finds herself in an abusive relationship with a guy who is likely responsible for the murder of a neighborhood gay man. The murder throws Claude's life into a more urgent state of turmoil.

All Over Me cleverly uses Claude's musical awakening as a parallel for her sexual awakening. When she arrives at bar crowded with rock'n'roll lesbians she is stunned by the all-girl band on the stage. The band includes the magnetic real-life musicians Mary Timony from Helium, and the pink haired Leisha Hailey (who now plays a much-less-attractive character on the popular television drama *The L Word*) from The

Murmurs. Claude's reaction to the music and the girls playing it makes for a real hold-your-breath movie moment. The audience can practically see the light bulb illuminate above her head.

After her trip to the bar, Claude's life begins to take a positive turn. She is able—after one quick, Patti-Smith-induced emotional meltdown—to ditch her no-good, boy-obsessed best friend in favor of a potentially hot love affair with Hailey's character. In one of the movie's final scenes we see Claude and her pink haired, guitar-wielding lover girl playing guitars and making out in her bedroom. Music, namely music made by the ladies, is Claude's redemption and the audience can only hope that Claude's ambitions of starting her own band come to fruition after the credits roll.

JOSIE AND THE PUSSYCATS (Universal 2001)

This live-action interpretation of the girl group from Archie comics would be placed firmly in my "guilty pleasure" category if it weren't so damn good. Easy to dismiss because of its cheesy mainstream marketing, the film actually manages to make a statement about popular music, product placement, and mindless trend following. It is also extremely funny, with flawless parodies of everything from boy bands (the opening sequence features a performance by the well-named band, Du Jour) to MTV.

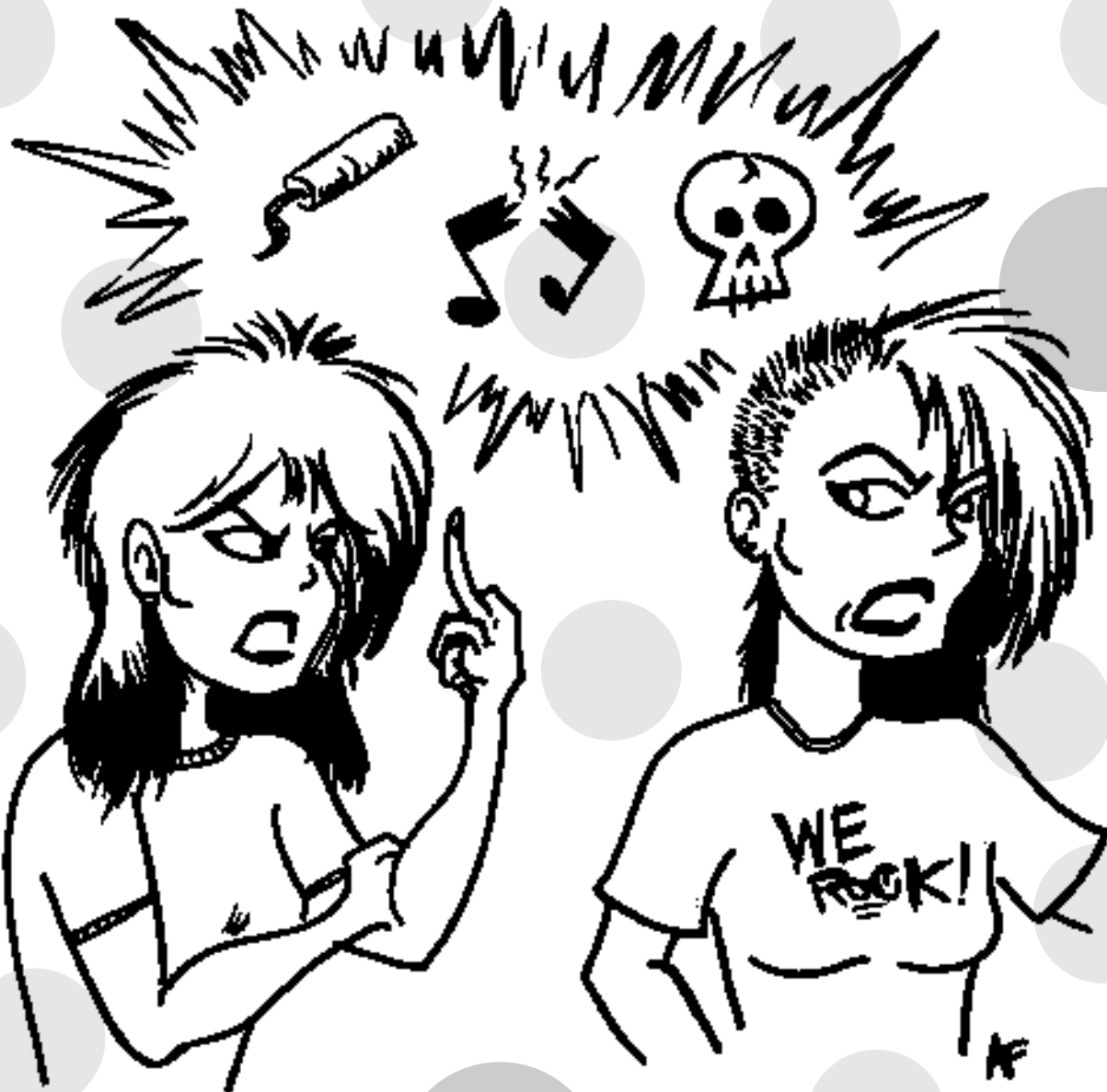
Josie and the Pussycats tells the story of the fast and dirty rise to fame of the grrrrly three piece and, once again, we see egos get in the way of friendship and, sigh, musical integrity. Only this time the ego is actually the result of subliminal messages placed in the band's recordings by their evil manager (played with absolute comic brilliance by Alan Cumming). Of course, the Pussycats triumph over the major label adversity and Josie even gets to have an

onstage snog-fest with her hot indie rock boy, Alan M.

While the Pussycats' comic book origins seem to have given the filmmakers a license for complete hyperbole, they haven't taken their responsibilities lightly. All three Pussycat actresses (Rachel Leigh Cook, Tara Reid, and Rosario Dawson) were sent to "band camp" for two weeks prior to filming. Once there, they not only helped to record the film's soundtrack, but also had professional musicians teaching them how to play their characters' instruments. It is highly satisfying to watch a movie where the musicians' fingers are actually following the chord progressions of the song the audience is hearing.

The film's soundtrack of pop punk gems (written and recorded by an army of professional musicians that included the Go-Go's Jane Weidlin and Canadian lady rocker Bif Naked) is more than just background music for the characters' lives. The songs are heard in their entirety at many points throughout the film, which makes the film exciting for any music-loving audience member.

This is, essentially, a film about the vapid pop music industry caring more about sales than it does about music. The film makes its point, but by the end of the movie the "parody" product placements (french fry shaped sponges in your MacDonald's bathroom, anyone?) becomes slightly nauseating. Still, if you have a niece, or little sister, or daughter who thinks Avril Lavigne rules, this would be the perfect movie to watch with her. The songs in the movie are a non-threatening introduction to girl punk and the movie's overall message is a great jumping off point for any little girl with a burgeoning interest in media literacy. After you watch the movie you can have a discussion about evil corporations, and then buy her an Unlovables CD.



**DOWN AND OUT WITH
the DOLLS**
(HART SHARP VIDEO 2001)

Down and Out With the Dolls chronicles the rise and fall of an all-girl group in that Mecca of girl groups: Portland, Oregon. It has everything a good girl-band movie should have: great music, hair pulling, arguments about tampons, sleazy rock boys, drunken parties, and a little bit of death.

The Paper Dolls are the musical project of the heart-breakingly dorky Kali who has big dreams for her little band. Kali isn't prepared, however, for the thoughtless antics of her primadonna lead singer Fauna, who personifies every possible bad quality that lead singers are known to possess. As The Dolls' popularity increases, their relationship with each other falls apart (are you tired of this

plotline yet?) and their band eventually self-destructs. I went to see this film in the theatre with the member of my own band whom I had the most volatile relationship with and we cringed at the point in the film where the band mates chose to move into a house together. Is this ever a good idea? It may have worked for the Partridge Family, but it spells certain disaster for The Paper Dolls.

This film is like an underground version of *Josie and the Pussycats*. The actresses are actual musicians themselves, so the songs and the performances are remarkably authentic. The characters and events of the movie are exaggerated enough to be entertaining, but realistic enough inspire empathetic groans from the audience. Both its hyperbole and its realism add to the film's pervasive humor; the audience is either laughing at the

insanity of the plot or the understandable folly of the characters.

According to one of the film's actresses, Canadian hip hop sensation Kinnie Starr, the film was originally slated for wide release in the fall of 2002. I talked to Starr after one of her concerts just days after I saw *Down and Out with the Dolls* at a small queer film festival here in Ottawa. She was happy to go into detail about what went wrong, distribution-wise. According to Starr, the problem lay with the all-male band in the film, the unfortunately named Suicide Bombers. Because of that band's name *Down and Out with the Dolls* was dropped by its distribution company, just after the incidents of September 11th. At that time, no one wanted to distribute a film that even mentioned the concept of suicide bombing, so *Down and*

Out with the Dolls never truly saw the light of day (uh, no reference to the Joan Jett/Michael J. Fox film intended.)

On an unrelated but interesting note: Motörhead fans will want to watch this movie just to see the one and only Lemmy playing the mysterious and unintelligible man who lives in Fauna's bedroom closet.

PREY FOR ROCK 'N ROLL (Lions Gate 2003)

Prey for Rock'n Roll is the work of punk rock writer/tattoo artist Cheri Lovedog, who has achieved remarkable success writing about how unsuccessful her music career has been. The movie's script draws on Lovedog's years of frustrating experiences as the leader of girl punk bands in Hollywood. Lovedog's story was first brought to life as a musical, which had a triumphant run at CBGBs in New York. *Prey for Rock 'n Roll* was then adapted into a powerful film starring Gina Gershon as Jacki, the growly band leader turning forty and feeling low about her lack of a recording contract. Gershon took guitar lessons from Joan Jett to prepare for the role, and this lends to the authenticity of her performance.

The movie establishes immediate punk rock cred as Jacki quickly details her own life story. As a teen, Jacki tells us, she ran away to Hollywood with dreams of becoming a rock star. She fell in love with punk rock, her narration explains, when she saw X perform in L.A. X is conjured up again later in the movie when Jacki's band, Clamdandy (yes, this is a terrible name) scores a gig opening for the legendary punks. It is this gig that has the potential to propel the band to stardom, but, sadly, the recording contract offered to them is less than dreamy. While the band's shot at stardom is unraveling, their lives take a turn for the worse when their drummer is raped. Jacki manages to exact revenge on the rapist and then rise from the proverbial ashes of yet another disaster after a different band member is killed in a car accident.

This movie succeeds for so many reasons. It manages to marry some universal themes of girl rock—sexism, friendship, and power struggles—with a totally original and compelling story. The film touches on women's feelings of powerlessness and holds up rock-'n'-roll as a way of combating that lack of power. The refusal of the music industry to take women seriously is exposed as just

another link in the chain of society's general disrespect for women. It is refreshing to see a movie about a rock ladies pushing forty and also exciting to see a plot that forgoes the "quick rise to fame" formula. In this film it is the band members' personal relationships that are successful, not their music careers. This is a much more realistic direction, and it is one that creates the necessity of well-drawn characters and a superbly constructed original story.

EPILOGUE

At a Monday night practice towards the end of my band's dubious career, we worked together to write a song called "Flamethrower." The song sprang from the realization that we were having that particular band practice on the anniversary of the night one of us had been brutally attacked by a stranger, almost ten years earlier. The bridge of the song had me yelling, "Disappear!" and after a few tries we decided that we would all yell the word together in unison. It was the only time in the band's history where we all used our voices at once. I loved hearing us all scream in unison. Even though it came towards the end, it was one of the best things about being in the band. Yelling together with other girls during a song about our own experiences gave our band the perfect blend of power, pain, hope, and aggression.

It is all of those elements that make films about all-girl bands so compelling. Not to mention the fact that most of these films, like the bands they chronicle, are only exposed to the limelight for a brief period of time before plagued by bad luck or disaster. The power of the all-female band always seems to go hand in hand with potential disaster. Walking the line between power and disaster is painful and freaky when you have to do it yourself, but watching characters in a movie do the same thing in undoubtedly entertaining.

Jennifer Whiteford's first novel Grrrl features many all-girl bands and will be published by Gorsky Press in the fall.

Where to find the films:

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Fabulous Stains on DVD is almost always up for auction on Ebay. Otherwise, it can be hard to find.

Desperate Teenage Lovedolls DVD is also often available through Ebay, but can also be ordered online from www.wegotpowerfilms.com.

All Over Me is available on DVD from www.tlavideo.com.

Josie and the Pussycats should be for rent at your local video store and is available on DVD just about anywhere on the internet.

Down and Out with the Dolls DVD available from Madman Cinema www.madmancinema.com.au.

Prey for Rock 'n Roll is stocked in many fine video stores and is available on DVD from your choice of internet store.

Soundtrack albums are also available for all movies except for *Ladies and Gentlemen, the Fabulous Stains*.

Some other suggestions for lovers of girl bands and the movies that portray them...

Satisfaction 1988 (critically panned movie about all girl band starring Justine Bateman and Julia Roberts)

Serial Mom 1994 (features L7 as the all-girl band Camel Toe)

Girl 1998 (starring the Pussycat drummer Tara Reid as a rebellious teenage lesbian rock'n'roller)

The Go-Go's: Live in Central Park 2001 (everyone's favourite all-girl band, LIVE!)

Edgeplay 2004 (a very well-reviewed documentary about The Runaways)



BLOODBATH AND

When the word "supergroup" is mentioned, I tend to think of people coming together to express something artistically that they haven't been able to in their other bands. When I think of Bloodbath and Beyond, a few other things come to mind. Like drink, drank, drunk. A band born out of a drunken idea. None of the four members living under a thousand miles from the next. With members of Dillinger Four, Tiltwheel, The Observers, J. Church, Cleveland Bound Death Sentence, and Assisted Living Dracula, they fit the line-up of a super group. But what are they? When I asked them what they sound like (one of the worst questions to ever ask anybody without the intention of good fun) Mike said, "You're evil;" Ben: "A big ol' pile of bullshit;" Davey: "A dumptruck being run over by a cheese grater mixed inside a burrito so the sound is a bit muffled and then dogs barking 'til you shove pens up the urethras and like M&Ms with peanuts;" but Paddy may have summed it up best in one word: "fart."

The original plan was that they would meet up at Ben's house in Austin, TX, hang out for a week, play two shows, and record. They met up, ate pounds of meat, drank gallons of alcohol, played the shows, but the recording equipment didn't work. Does a band like Bloodbath And Beyond throw in the towel and say it was good while it lasted? No, they start planning to meet up in a few months in Escondido, CA, home to Davey Tiltwheel to record again. Bad for their livers, but good for me. These are some of the best guys I know and this gave me ample time to see them, interview them, eat some burritos, and still make it to the 6am bar.

Megan: Davey, you once said, "Quit thinking about it in terms of a scene. It's all personal to me."

Davey: I did?

Paddy: Yeah.

Megan: So, if there is no scene, then how is this even able to happen?

Davey: We've got boners and buttholes, and that's how it happened. But seriously, I don't know. I don't know what kind of shit I must've been saying then. When the fuck did I say something like that? I must've been in Dubuque or something.

Paddy: I've been traveling around for a long time. And Davey's been traveling around for a long time. Mike, he's still kind of green, but he's been traveling around a lot.

Davey: He travels a lot.

Paddy: Ben's been traveling around for a long time. He's met motherfuckers I ain't even met. And vice versa. I think this band is beautiful because I'm fucking wasted and I'm here to tell you that it was four fuck-ups that found each other and we made some bullshit. And we know it's bullshit. But this is bullshit. This band is bullshit.

Ben: It's our excuse to get drunk for a week.

Paddy: Goddamn, this is gonna be the best bullshit you're gonna see all month.

Davey: The weirdest fucking thing is I've known Paddy for about ten years, right? Maybe since '95? Ben was in the first band that ever stayed at my house, this band Whirleybird...

Paddy: You were in band called Whirleybird?!

Davey: Yeah, they played our bar. Andy who owned the bar is coming to the show tonight.

Ben: Oh, really?

Paddy: Whirleybird?

Davey: I mean, I never talked to Ben more than once or twice after that. But then Mike, I've known Mike since he was fucking twelve years old. I was really into little kids back then.

Mike: You took me on tour when I was fifteen years old.

Davey: Yeah, we took Mikey on his first tour and corrupted him, I hope. So, it was weird, we've all kind of known each other for a long time in one sense.

Paddy: It actually formed at the Triple Rock (a bar that Erik of Dillinger Four and his wife Gretchen own) because Snakepit was in town and the Observers were playing at the Triple Rock and we all got shitfaced. We were all sitting around talking about dumb shit like dumb, fat, drunk bastards do.

Davey: And then I came up.

Paddy: We were like, "Hey, we're talking about dumb, drunk, fat people. Hey, do you know Davey?" 'Cause this is like a mafia and he's the godfather. We called him and were like, "We gotta do a band." "Okay, but this band's gonna suck." "Okay, let's do a sucky band." "Sucky bands gotta go all over the country." "Alright let's all do it."

Davey: This is like the fourth phone call I'd gotten from him in two months. Every time somebody goes to the Triple Rock

and hangs out with him. He fuckin' ends up calling me to form a band or something.

Paddy: Well yeah! Because Tiltwheel... man everybody's coming to me and telling me Dillinger Four doesn't tour. Tiltwheel's like the goddamn fucking pyramids, man. I mean goddamn. We're like the fuckin' Wham! to your Led Zeppelin, man.

Davey: I see Mike more now since he moved away then when I did when he lived here.

Paddy: That's because he's sixteen and he's traveling all the time on a fucking train. He rides his dirt bike from Portland to fucking San Diego. Mike's riding on his fucking newspaper route.

Ben: Bloodbath and Beyond!

Megan: How do you make Champipple?

Paddy: Well it kind of depends on where you're from.

Megan: I was going to ask if there were regional variations, too.

Paddy: There should be. Champipple is what Redd Fox drank and it was a mixture of really cheap wine and really cheap champagne. The idea was that all day he would film *Sanford and Son* in Los Angeles and drink this weird thing out of a coffee cup. But then he was doing every night in Las Vegas. He'd fly out to Vegas and come back the next day and do *Sanford and Son* all day. But the thing is, he would add weird shit every day to make it flavored differently. So, the idea is that as long as you start with Andre strawberry and Boone's Farm, any sort of flavor you want, or Mad Dog, or preferably both. Then you add whatever you can to make it regional. So, in Minneapolis, it's Bourbon, Sparks, and Pilsner. Apparently here it's—what is it Davey? Slimfast?

Megan: Awwwww.

Mike: It's Slimfast, horchata...

Paddy: No, that's what Davey told me. I didn't make it—I'm fat!

Davey: Here we were thinking Mariachi salsa, you know you got your bases, your foundation. Then you add the adobe fuckin' housing on top. You've got salsa—that's the only really non-alcoholic ingredient besides your Mexican lead-filled candy.

Paddy: Yeah, that's good, the sour apple.

Davey: Yeah, the sour apple shit is really nice.

BEYOND

Ben: guitar and vocals

Davey: guitar and vocals

Mike: drums

Paddy: bass and vocals

**Interview and photos
by Megan Pants**

Mike: Crazy mix!

Davey: And then we put some of that salty Tamarind fuckin' shit with the duck on it, some of that stuff. We put whiskey, a little vodka.

Mike: Japanese gin.

Davey: Yeah, that we got from No People.

Paddy: The Japanese gin makes you talk weird.

Megan: How?

Davey: Like this [pulling his eyes slanting back] Shit all fucked up! That's your joke. It's Paddy's joke, not mine.

Megan: Good one.

Paddy: How's that a good one?
Ahoya hoy!

Davey: We've been thinking about making a California martini. We figure it's like gin and Colt 45 with a rolled taco stickin' out of it. But I think a rolled taco might work in Champipple pretty good.

Paddy: That would work for a Chicago 'Pipple, too. If there was a band from Chicago that was worthy of making 'Pipple. I mean, no offense, but like... I mean there's bands I love from Chicago, but the Arrivals are too busy drinking for free at their neighborhood bars. They don't have time to make Champipple.

Davey: They're too busy making bread and all this crap.

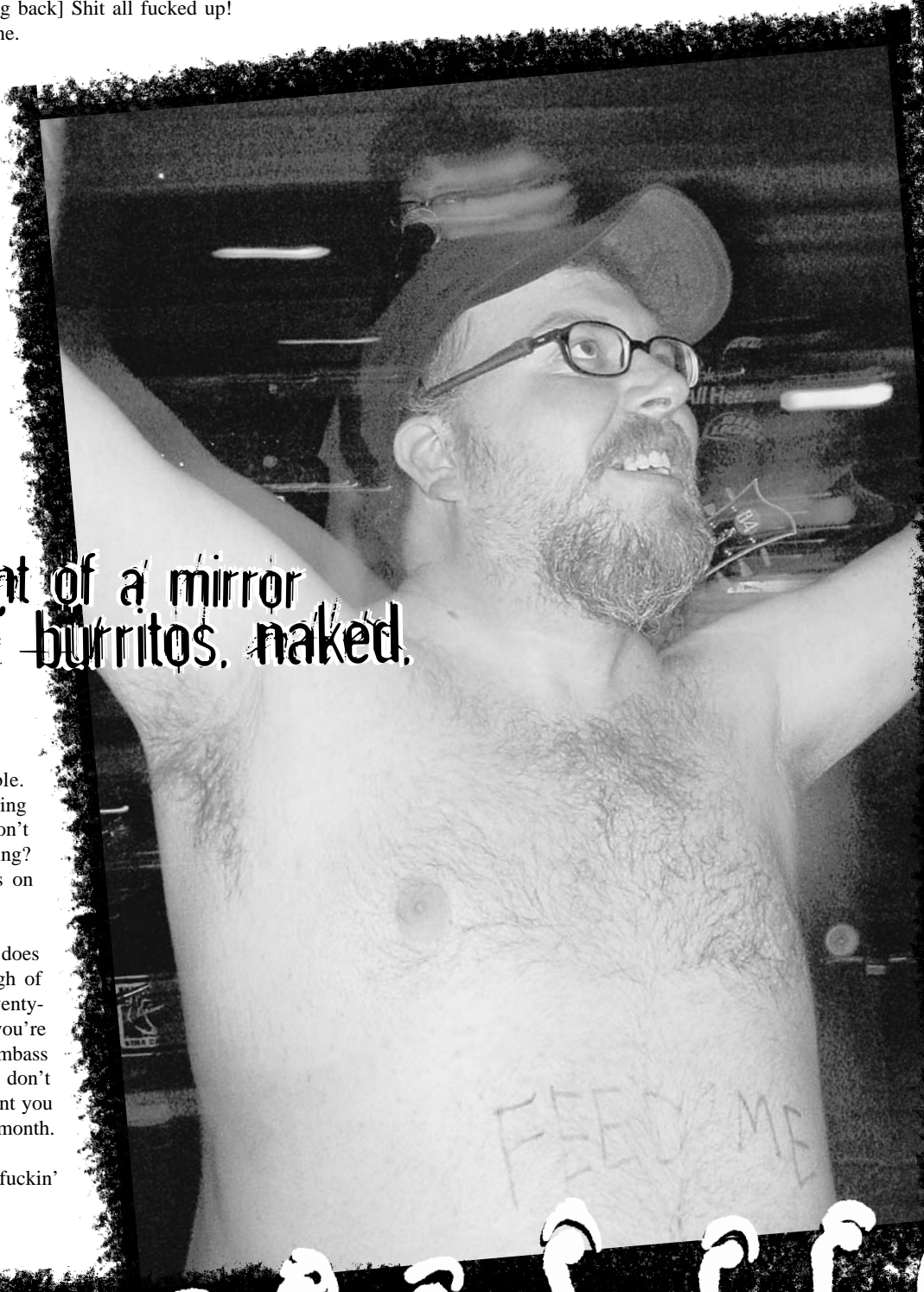
So we sit in front of a mirror
and eat fuckin' burritos, naked,
and we drink.

Paddy: Exactly, we're makin' trouble. [Seeing three crust punks pushing a shopping cart down the street] Man, those guys don't even know, where the fuck are they going? Man, all these motherfuckers got patches on their back. The shows over here!

Mike: Dumpster show! Dumpster show!

Paddy: Can I just say that homeless just does not impress me anymore? I've had enough of this shit. For real, goddamn, I've paid twenty-seven dollars a month rent on a place, and you're gonna push a shopping cart around you dumbass motherfucker? You're an asshole and you don't know anybody that likes you enough to rent you their fucking laundry room for a dollar a month. You're walking away from the show!

Davey: I think without crust pants, I think fuckin' punks would have holes in their clothes.



We're gonna fuckin' win

forever



Paddy: Man, can we just cut to the chase? If you were strung out in fuckin' New Zealand and you needed to buy like seventeen pairs of Air Jordans from 1984 in New Zealand right now, just fucking text message fucking Davey. He'll figure a way you can buy all those shoes for like a dollar. Tomorrow. He knows a guy who'll show up at the bar. Seriously, I need every Dungeon Master's guide module one through eight tomorrow for a dollar. And that dude'll show up and he'll be like, "Oh I fuckin' met Davey when he was playing bass for Discharge in like Eighteen Hundred and Seventy-Four." Davey can get you tacos in South America.

Paddy and Davey: They don't have tacos in South America.

Paddy: We just globetrotter on that shit!

Davey: I had to show a lady in Mexico how to make a burrito.

Megan: They've gotta have someone making 'em for the white folks.

Davey: They don't have burritos in fuckin' Baja, California.

Paddy: They've got white babies for twelve dollars in fuckin' Paolo Alto.

Mike: That's in California, man.

Paddy: Not the original. I just made that up.

Davey: Not the original!

Megan: You're all in bands that have pretty serious lyrics. Bloodbath doesn't have the most serious lyrics.

Mike: Most of it's heartfelt, though.

Paddy: Actually, we're very serious.

Davey: Fuckin' totally serious. So fuckin' serious, people are gonna start to...

Megan: I think what Paddy said earlier was, "It's not even about stuff."

Paddy: It's not about stuff, it's about things.

Megan: Is it any different than writing songs for your other bands?

Davey: Here's the deal. We're all really sober, straightedged individuals normally. Then we get together, and it's like, "Well, what's the one

thing that hasn't been touched?" You've got the eyeliner punks, and the guys that practice their jumps and shit. So we sit in front of a mirror and eat fuckin' burritos, naked and we drink. "Am I doing it right?" [Takes a swig with his mouth shut, beer pours over the front of his shirt.] Oh god. I mean we practice that shit. It's a concerted effort. You put four great minds thinking alike... wait, we're talking about us, aren't we? I think the amalgamation of the parts...

Paddy: Amalgamation?

Mike: Isn't that word out of a Mike Farley song?

Davey: It's from a Propagandi song, you mother...

Paddy: This is point to this band: anybody can play any fucking thing and we'll show up and play that shit. Free. You could be a fucking bro from Salt Lake City. If you write a good enough letter, if Ben reads it, and he thinks it sounds about right, we're gonna show up in Salt Lake City and play your bullshit. And this is fuckin' why. 'Cause music is fucking math and I passed that shit. And we're gonna fucking win forever. All the time. Fart in mouth. Shit in my pants. Fucking seduction of the warlock. I'm telling you right now music is easy and we're gonna prove it. This year. We're playing all that shit.

Ben: Music is easy. We're gonna prove it.

Paddy: It doesn't matter. Led Zeppelin were a bunch of fuckin' hacks. Bloodbath and Beyond!

Megan: Paddy, how did you get involved in playing a 52.4 hour song?

Paddy: Oh wow, you did some Google shit search or something.

Davey: What's .4 hours?

Paddy: Uhhhh.

Megan: Fifteen minutes. No, that's be .25.

Mike: Twenty-four minutes.

Paddy: My friend, Mark Mallmen, he tried to go for the Guinness Book of World Records to play the longest song of all time.

Davey: And he failed miserably.

Mike: No, he didn't fail, he fuckin' did it. I fuckin' jammed with him.

Davey: No, because Jim Planter has that fucking song. It's been going five years already. He wants it to go a thousand years, and that stuff sucked.

Paddy: Yeah, but he still has to pee in Sunderland, c'mon man. He's not playing a song twenty-four hours a day.

Megan: This was live; this wasn't recorded.

Davey: This was live? Who the fuck stuck around and watched you guys all the time?

Paddy: I was fucking wasted and I played for two and a half hours. No, that's a goddamn lie. I played for an hour and a half. Not two and a half hours.

Davey: That's good, I was worried about you.

Paddy: Mark Mallmen's this dude from Minneapolis who's totally out of his mind. He loves kissing girls, he loves eatin' hotdogs, and he loves getting wasted. Then he asked me to play bass on his song that was gonna go on for 367 days. I told him I would do it if I could only play for a couple hours. He said yeah. But then I went on a golf tournament that day and I lost really bad, but I shotgunned Bud Lights all day. This is true. And I drank margaritas out of a bottle. Then I went and played with him for a while. We jammed on some shit. That shit was tight. We're doing a split, actually, with Bloodbath and Beyond. The Bloodbath and Beyond side is two minutes long, but the Mark Mallmen side is three days.

Megan: This is a seven inch, right?

Paddy: It's gonna be the biggest seven inch of all time. It's a seven inch in theory.

Megan: Davey, what's your opinion on recent legislation requiring to have a passport to cross the Mexican border starting in 2007?

Davey: Let's not get into this shit. The last thing I need to do is get all political.

Paddy: No, go get 'em. Let me tell you something. I'm thinking about moving to San Diego just so that I can vote for Davey to be the fucking king.

Davey: If you move to Escondido you can vote for me. I'm gonna run for city council.

Paddy: Done and done.

Davey: It's really simple if you think about it. Just the U.S. and Asia are the only continents where you need a passport to travel to other countries that are bordering you in the entire world. I mean freedom... isn't free. Freedom's just another word for nothin' left to lose. Except your mind. And when outlaws are outlawed, only outlaws will be outlaws. Fuckin' a, man. No, it's terrible. I live in a border town. There is no problem with illegal immigration here. It's not a problem.

Paddy: I don't know how you got in.

Davey: Show me one fucking white guy who's been denied a job here because some Mexican took it. Just show that to me, and I might start to think about it, but it ain't gonna happen. I don't see fuckin' Mexicans lining up to work at fuckin' Starbucks or Alibi (San Diego bar) or some fancy cracker's—hey! [looks at Paddy because it's a nickname for him]—thrift shop.

Paddy: I didn't apply for no job.

Davey: My dad put it all in perspective for me a long time ago. Because every Saturday or Sunday morning somebody comes to the door at like seven in the morning. "Trabajo? Trabajo?" They want to work, clean windows, anything. And my dad says, "If a white kid comes to the house and asks to mow our lawn or trim our trees or anything just for a few bucks to feed his family, then maybe I'll start thinking that that's a problem." And I thought about that, and was like, "Yeah, you're right."

Paddy: I fuckin' hate white people.

Davey: We're very racist against white people.

Paddy: Seriously, as a band, we've talked about this so much.

Davey: Show me a white guy. Seriously, show me a white guy who doesn't think he can do his job better than the fuckin' boss, and I'll give you a dollar.

Paddy: I'll give you a member of Bloodbath and Beyond.

Davey: I'll give you fuckin' Ben. Seriously, passports? C'mon, it's just a bunch of shit. You can't buy beer with a fuckin' passport in San Diego.



Paddy: You can't buy beer in my bar in Minneapolis with a passport.

Davey: You can't go to a bar in San Diego.

Paddy: I couldn't buy beer in fucking Phoenix with my state ID from Minnesota. I'm like 487 years old.

Davey: In an airport. In a fucking airport. You know how many people in a fucking airport have fucking ID for the state they just flew into?

Paddy: None.

Davey: None of 'em. Unless they're like ex-pats or some shit like that. It just makes no sense. It's pretty insane what's going on out there. For what? What are we protecting ourselves from?

Paddy: The only protection I want is from the people who live around me.

Davey: I want protection from the people who live around me. They just towed fuckin' Matty's (Davey's roommate) truck. I don't have to worry about fuckin' ragheads, or whatever they're calling them these days. Whatever racist shit they use. I have to worry about a cop who lives next door to me. I want somebody to

do something like that. I want my community to fucking back me up on that. I've got this sign at the front of my street: "Neighborhood watch." I want my neighborhood to watch this asshole. String him and his fuckin' old lady and burn 'em. Parade 'em around like one of those fuckin' Bush rag dolls in Iraq. Fuck.

Paddy: See, this is why our songs are about nothin'. Our songs are about how our country is the dumbest country I've ever been in my whole fuckin' life.

Davey: It sucks.

Paddy: We just got together and were like, "Fuck that. Let's smoke a bunch of weed and get drunk as hell and make fun of every fucking thing." Fuck 'em 'cause we've got that freedom that every fucking conservative asshole has ever told us we've got. We're gonna test that. I will snort coke off the goddamn Statue of Liberty as long as I can play at Bent Outta Shape's fuckin' warehouse space.

Davey: They hate our freedom. You know what? I hate our freedom, too. It sucks.

Paddy: Dude, you tell them we're supposed to celebrate our freedom? Fuck yeah, this is what this band is all about. We're gonna push that fuckin' freedom, 'cause I'm American. I was born into the fraternity, you goddamn assholes. I'm gonna fuckin' shoot heroin, and I don't even want to, but I'm going to do it just 'cause you tell me I'm free. Well goddamn, all right. Fuck Catholicism. I'm gonna shoot heroin and fart in your mouth.

Megan: Paddy, you had a vomit contest in a laundrymat? Did you win?

Paddy: I did win. I won that shit.

Megan: How do you determine a winner?

Paddy: Because I did it first. Slug from Atmosphere he got all rap on me and...

Ben: He got all rap?

Paddy: He did, dude. He did. He was like, "Mr. Dibbs can throw up." That's his DJ "on point." I was like, "Cool, I can do that." And he was like, "Let's do it right now." We just went into the laundrymat and I threw up.

Davey: Why'd you go into a laundrymat?

Paddy: Because it was right there.

Davey: You know what's the weird thing? Punks can throw up. We don't have much going for us, but we can throw the fuck up. Even if you haven't eaten in a week 'cause you're pushing a shopping cart around, you can still throw up. You can throw up dust from the fuckin' dumpster.

Paddy: I could throw up right now.

Davey: Let's do it.

Paddy: You want to throw up right now?

Davey: Let's have a fuckin' puking contest.

Paddy: All right.

Megan: While they're doing that, Mike, what's a devil-monkey?

Mike: I have no idea.

Megan: I found this picture of you, as a pirate...

[Gagging noises from outside of the van, laughing from inside. Paddy wins.]

Megan: ... and it says, "Mike 'Devil-Monkey' Napkin."

Mike: That's from a high school dance, taken with my high school sweetie in my sophomore year or something. The dude who painted the pirate garb and scenery over it is some dude I've never met, nor remember talking to, who used to post on the same punk rock message board as I. He made similar images of other board-posters and gave them similarly inane names. I have no idea why. The internet is magical.

Megan: Davey, who did you say this about: "I'd be willing to commit a non-violent crime and get a jail term so I could get close enough to fuck him in the ass with a shank made from a broken broomstick."?

Paddy: Oh shit.

Davey: The president?

Megan: Yeah.

Mike: Or the Pope.

Ben: Yeah, or the pope.

Paddy: You must've been mad as hell that night, man. Holy shit.

Davey: A non-violent crime because I don't want to go down for a long time. I don't want to hurt anybody to get to the king shit.

Mike: You could steal some big shit.

Davey: But I think I would probably say my neighbor right now.

Paddy: Yeah, fuck your neighbors, man.

Megan: What's the most impressive word you know, Ben?

Davey: [whispering] Amalgamation.

Megan: I'm curious about your brocabulary.

Ben: Brocabulary. The most impressive word I know would be... dude. That's a loaded word.





Davey: Did you do it?

Mike: Yeah, it was during their prime. It was awesome because the Spice Girls are awesome, but also because as a frequent attendee of tiny punk rock shows it was totally bizarre and entertaining to be in the exact opposite setting for live music.

Paddy: Dude, Sporty's the coolest.

Mike: It was back when anything you bought could have the Spice Girls on it. You could buy any product with the Spice Girls.

Davey:

Yeah, when we went to

Japan. The 99 Cent Store

that we all went to had Spice Girls

hats. So, I bought

them all for the Japanese guys. You know, because

you have to bring a gift or something. So, I brought them

all Spice Girls hats. I thought they'd be all, "Thank you. Thank

you." And, instead, they... [takes off his hat looks at it strangely, and reluctantly

puts it back on his head] I've never seen a Japanese guy who you give a gift to question it.

Mike: It was cool. Me and my buddy Willy went and saw them. We were fifteen.

Megan: You're a big fan of pop in general though.

Mike: Yeah, pop's pretty cool. I think the Spice Girls were the last mainstream pop that was any good. I do like pop in my punk, having been exposed to punk by bands like Screaching Weasel and the like, but as far as mainstream pop music is concerned, the Spice Girls were a rare exception. On the whole, I think mainstream music is a sham and ought not to be supported.

Paddy: I liked the Spice Girls. That "Spice Up Your Life" song? When I don't have coffee and I wake up in the morning and there's no coffee, I listen to that song and it fuckin' works the same.

Mike: Hey, how the fuck did you know I went to see the Spice Girls?

Megan: I do my fucking research, dude.

Mike: Do you know my buddy Willy?

Megan: No.

Davey: Did you see the Spice Girls with Willy?

Paddy: *Razorcake* is fucking retarded like that. They'll bring up shit. They're about to ask me about fucking a dude in the truck stop in 1989.

Megan: Yeah, but who doesn't know about that?

Paddy: Only the dude.

Megan: Ben once said, "We all have routines that we follow every day and spend most of our lives trying to break those routines, but usually they turn out to be new routines altogether." So, what's the routine of Bloodbath and Beyond?

Ben: Drinkin' and smokin' weed and drinkin' and smokin' weed.

Davey: He's so Nikki Six.

Mike: I don't even smoke weed and that's how it works with me.

Paddy: And listen to Hickey.

Paddy: My favorite word from brocabulary is whipapilla. That means a big ass. A big fuckin' juicy ass.

Mike: Whipapilla? Never heard of it.

Paddy: It's solid, it's juicy, it's where the booty comes from.

Megan: You also won an award for knowing a word, didn't you?

Ben: I knew the Klingon word for heaven, which is *qui-tu*. I was at a Star Trek convention when I was eleven or twelve and I won the trivia contest because I knew that word. I went up to get up my prize—it's this big crowd of people—I walk up to the podium and they hand me my prize, and it's a Klingon dictionary. I say into the mic—I'm twelve and I feel like I'm the fuckin' shit—and I'm like, "I obviously don't need this." All the nerds laugh. I just thought I was the fucking shit, dude.

Megan: ...at the Star Trek convention.

Ben: Yeah, dude.

Paddy: Do you still have it?

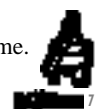
Ben: I didn't need it.

Paddy: We need to write a song in Klingon. We've already conquered the earth. We need to reach out to special planets.

Megan: Mike, what's it like to see the Spice Girls in concert?

Paddy: Whoa.

Mike: Wow.



Hey Goober: Full album art is required for review. Pre releases go into the trash.

400 BLOWS: *Angel's Trumpets and Devil's Trombones*: CD

New hard tightness from this LA band who also puts on some of the best shows I've seen lately. I've described them before as Black Flag Sabbath: heavy, heavy dark riffs, math beats, some fuzz through big amps—although no bass guitar—and higher vocals swimming over it all. Catchy quickness sharing time with moody sludge. Awesome. The Blows could appeal to metalheads but it's also too confusing calculus (a la Ruins from Japan) for hessians. They've played with varied bands as The Fuse!, High On Fire, Fleshies, and The Locust. All makes sense to me. —Speedway Randy (GSL)

7 SHOT SCREAMERS:

***Keep the Flame Alive*: CD**

Produced—horribly—by Levi Dexter, the immense sonic shrimpiness of these would-be punk/glam-informed rockabilly brigands is not at all helped by the fact that there's a chord progression in "Kickin' Myself" that sounds like it was lifted directly from "Jumping Someone Else's Train" by The Cure—though this recording is so thin and ball-less it actually makes The Cure sound like a bunch of hairy, obese bikers in chrome helmets with spikes coming out of the top by comparison. One might be given pause to wonder whether or not the instruments the band is depicted with on the cover are mere props, and if the band actually recorded this disc with instruments constructed completely out of Saltine crackers—but, on the bright side, if you've ever wondered what "Born Too Loose" would've sounded like had the Dead Milkmen covered it, this might be as close as you need to get right here. Dudes: Levi's got a cool jacket and all, but the next time you guys go into the studio, you might wanna consider parking him down at the pub early on. Geez, I hope he at least kept his shirt on. **BEST SONG:** "Born Too Loose," duh. **BEST SONG TITLE:** "TV," although it is not the Rose Tattoo song of the same name **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** I met Levi Dexter. —Rev. Nørh (Haunted Town)

A FRAMES, THE:

***Black Forest*: CD**

Think of the Fall as a coin. If a band like the Country Teasers represents the funny, ironic side of the Fall, then the A Frames would be the dark, edgy, sardonic side. For a three-piece, the A Frames are amazingly tight; there's a constant push-and-pull going on, with none of the instruments really taking center stage. I don't really pay attention to trends in music, but it seems like bands that draw from late '70s British post-punk are getting a lot of hype these days, and I'd just like to say that the A Frames are too confrontational and non-commercial to be lumped in with all that shit. As an album, it's a bit spotty but



Sadly, there is no stank to be found on this release.

—Josh Benke



there's some really great stuff on here and it's worth picking up. —Josh (Sub Pop)

ABI YOYOS: *This World Is Not My Home*: 7" EP

I have the feeling that someone in the Abi Yoyos really likes the Minutemen and Nomeansno and are channeling them into the music without it bleeding directly into the notes. There's a nice, anxious melody and approach that pervades all of the songs. It's a curious, not-quite-synco-pated bounce and a way to mesh quite a bit of experimentation and simultaneous approaches to a song without it sounding like chunks in musical throwup. I got that feeling the first time I heard the Ergs! The surface is one thing—they're definitely a great first listen—but repeated listens are beginning to shower me with different-than-expected, hotter burning sparks. A pleasant surprise. —Todd (Abi Yoyos)

A-BOMB CHOP SHOP: *From the Coffin to the Rave*: CD-R

We all know the staff of *Razorcake* does wonders, aesthetically and otherwise, within the constraints of a budget—I acknowledge this. However, it is at this juncture in time in which I would implore, plead, and beg Sean and Todd to at least consider the possibility of taking out health insurance policies on its reviewers. Because I am fucking dying here. This is sickeningly bad psychobilly pabulum of the lowest order. Never a genre known for its lyrical brilliance, this is still incredibly, nearly majestically stupid. In most cases, I would say, "Some lyrics or band information would have been nice." But not this time. Oh, and one more thing, Mr. Chop Shop, sir: if you're going to put an \$8.95 price tag on the front of your album, please make certain the paper template you've pressed onto the cover of your CD-R doesn't show the lines from your laser printer. Doesn't look good at all, hoss. If you're gonna present something in a DIY but half-assed manner, I applaud

you, but please price accordingly. If you're gonna charge some sap nine bucks for a shitty six-song EP, make sure said EP doesn't look like something my drunk little brother did in Photoshop while he should have been out buying me cigarettes. —Keith Rosson (A-Bomb ChopShop)

ACTION SWINGERS:

***Self-titled*: CD**

Trashy, sludgy gutter rock with big guitars and snarling vocals—what else would you expect from a band comprised of members of Unsane, Pussy Galore, Sonic Youth, and Chrome Cranks? As evidenced on this reissue of their first album, these guys took the best of '60s lo-fi, no wave, punk rock, and Stoogified rock'n'roll and just fucked 'em all up in the best of ways. This is definitely some mandatory listening for your next garden party. —Jimmy Alvarado (Reptilian)

AGAINST ME!: *Sink, Florida, Sink* b/w *Unsubstantiated Rumors*: 7"

For the fans: two alternate versions of songs from the Fat full-length. For the collectors: the cover is a die-cut demented piece of work. Imagine if you will: Gingerbread Man 1 appears to be hugging his counterpart, Gingerbread Man 2. As you begin to open the cover to get at the music, you see that GM 1 has actually punctured GM 2's stomach and that because of your meddling, his hand is prematurely pulled back revealing the large wound. As you open the cover further, GM 1's hand is released (you can see the 7" at this point) and out of the gaping hole of GM 2's stomach spews his candy guts, all over the place in a rainbow upheaval of epic piñata proportions. Fuck yeah. —Mr. Z (No Idea)

ALMIGHTY DO ME

***A FAVOR: Calibama* b/w *Hoke's Bluff*: 7"**

One of my favorite memories in music last year was seeing the one-man-band

Almighty Do Me A Favor play in a grocery center parking lot, bashing away while an upright citizen fed him a beer mid-song. It was fun. Much better than the schwangled hipster fest that was prancing by on the other side of the parking lot wall. What I wasn't a hundred percent expecting was how good Bradley'd sound on vinyl. I mean, I knew I'd like it, but part of the charm of a one-man band is seeing all the limbs flailing, whacking all sorts of things, guitar strumming, harmonica honking, hootin' and hollerin'. Almighty's two songs sound like they're being played in a loved house that is burning all around him and the only thing he can do is play. Playing somehow keeps the fire from consuming him. Both songs are, in turn, creaking and crackling; desperate and joyful; all-beautiful in an entrancing, now-destructive, now-redemptive way. It's like the flames are on the final verge of no longer being controlled, of burning so hot that the only memories they will leave in their wake will be ash, so he's got to dig deep to extinguish it. Not a bad feeling to get from two songs. I can see fans of Hasil Adkins and the Bassholes cottoning to this real easily. —Todd (Kapow)

ALMIGHTY LUMBERJACKS OF DEATH: *Always out of Control, But Never out of Beer*: CD

The lyrics to "Where are We Now?" make me kinda wonder about where these guys are coming from, especially considering the "conservative" bent of some of their other lyrics. To wit: "The liberals say 'Equality,' but equality is a joke/Cuz they've got their hands around our necks and now we start to choke... The city hall is full of shit/and so are all the schools/and now we're waiting for the day when once again we fuckin' rule/gave 'em welfare, gave 'em jobs and tried to educate/a century after we freed the slaves all I see is hate." I won't even get into the blind rah-rah patriotism of "Soul of the Storm" or the hackneyed odes to drinking and having to work that abound on this "complete collection." The almost totally illegible font they used for the booklet didn't help matters much, either. Musically they ain't all that bad as far as modern American skinhead stuff goes (which I realize ain't saying much considering their competition), but I don't really see how what they do is fundamentally any different than your average modern country music concert, Fox newscast, or Clear Channel-sponsored flag-waving rally. Ultimately, the whole thing comes off as a not-too-funny joke, which I'm pretty sure wasn't their intention. —Jimmy Alvarado (Disconnected)

AMISH ARMADA:

***Give Up*: CD**

Hard-rocking Christians are always a hoot. Few things jack the needle up on the old laff-o-meter like constipated religious folk doing the Satan Rock thing. Remember Stryper? Sweet Jesus, what's funnier than a bunch of born-again Christians wrapped in tight spandex and playing hair metal? How about some Amish gentlemen casting aside their hoes and butter-churners and picking up electrical instruments to unleash an unholy sound that falls somewhere between Jesus Lizard and Fear? This is the Amish Armada's second full length and I'm sure there will be those who will describe them as an Amish Gwar; and while that comparison isn't totally

without merit, it's a tad superficial. I hear a myriad of influences here, everything from Mr. Bungle and the Dead Kennedys to Merle Travis. And when you add to that a crazed frontman with a mustache-less beard and a wide brim black hat who sounds like Lee Ving in his angrier days, you've got a wonderfully weird and potent mix. There's just something about the notion of an Amish Lee Ving that puts a little hike in my giddup. I never imagined neo-Luddites could be this much fun. Eclectic, dastardly smart, and funnier than an Amish circle jerk, the Amish Armada are a swift kick in the britches and are worthy of much notoriety. If I only knew the secret Amish gang handshake, I would shake their hands heartily. Good stuff. Bring this disc to your next quilting bee. —Aphid Peewit (Amish Armada)

ANTIGAMA: Discomfort: CD
I asked the Missus to hit play on the CD player and initially thought the noise I heard was a garbage truck emptying the dumpster behind our apartment—lots of rumbling, some sort of industrial motor screeching and chugging. But it was Thursday, and our trash gets picked up on Tuesday. The noise I heard was actually the grinding, metallic sounds of Antigama. This stuff is brutal: gruff, guttural, distorted vocals that sound as if the singer's vocal chords have been shredded with a weed whacker; mind-boggling time changes, starts and stops; frenzied drumming; violent, punishing riffage. Antigama go straight for your insides and rattle your core, sure to shake loose the shit from even the most constipated bowels. I can almost get into it when they find a groove, like on "Bloodmaker" and "Who Is My Enemy," but the rest of it is completely lost on me. Great if you're into this kinda thing. —Josh Benke, Cultural Ambassador (SelfMadeGod)

ANTI-PASTI: The Last Call: CD
This is a reissue of this UK punk band's first album, with requisite singles, live tracks, and alternate takes added on for good measure. A bit of an anomaly on the UK political punk scene at the time, Anti-Pasti played at a considerably slower pace and with less histrionics than many of their contemporaries, but they did seethe with a righteous anger, and had an uncanny knack for finding a groove in the simplest of riffs and milking it for all it's worth. The album itself is quite good, but the real treat here are the extras, which include the classic "No Government" and "Six Guns" singles tracks and the live cuts recorded on the "Apocalypse" tour. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

ANTISEEN: Thee from Parts Unknown: 7"
It's heavy and simple. Gruff and mean. In other words, it's a damn Antiseen record. Four blasts of rock'n'roll evilness here. No new ground covered, but that would just be silly anyway. What you see is what you get. Four scary dudes playing four scary tunes. I really liked the female vocal breakdown in the title track. This is the soundtrack to your next backyard wrestling extravaganza! —Ty Stranglehold (Scarey)

A-SIDES, THE: Hello, Hello: CD
Gentle, lilting pop music which sounds like a throwback to the 1960s. It's actually a very pleasant surprise of Beach Boys-inflected, *Pet Sounds*-era sunshine


rock (which means that it compares favorably with contemporaries like Beulah, the Pernice Brothers, the Aluminum Group and other chamber-pop specialists). This album strikes me as one that will take some time to grow on me, but don't be surprised if you hear about it again around the end of the year when I do my "best of" list because it just seems that there's a little too much here to appreciate in the span of time that most critics (myself included, this time) have to evaluate an album's merits. Mark it eight, dude. —Puckett (Prison Jazz)

AT THE SPINE: First Day of Spring: CD
I think what annoys me most about this record is the plea on the back to support independent music and to avoid copying this record if you can help it. Dudes, you don't have to worry about that last bit—I like people and wouldn't want to subject them to this. As to the first point, fuck independent music. Support GOOD music. This is everything but. I had realized over the years that there is simply no end to the things I can't do in music—I can't play guitar, bass, drums, flute, saxophone, keyboards, tuba, bassoon... none of that shit. I can't read or write music. I can't even whistle in tune. And singing? You're kidding, right? At any rate, I *thought* I knew all of that until I heard this and with the exception of a couple of pseudo-solos, I can play every goddamned thing on this disc and do it better because I at least figured out how to play a Ramones song or two on every instrument over the years. I can't sing, but at least I have the good sense not to try (meaning that, unlike this record, you'll rarely hear me off-pitch) and to yell in something approximating the same key. This? Fuck this. —Puckett (Global Seepaj)

BAKER STREET IRREGULARS, THE: Self-titled: CD
Dear Robert Daniel of Savannah, Georgia: I really like the first part of this CD. To me, it sounds like a lower-fi, Southern version of Replacements. The problem, though, is that about halfway through, the CD player starts freaking out and skipping, and I can't even make it to your version of "Mama Tried." I realize that it's just a technological problem and it's nobody's fault, but hopefully we can find a way to blame Bradley Williams for whatever went wrong. And I was also wondering if your pseudonym was an *Andy Griffith Show* reference or just a coincidence. Thanks for listening. —Josh (Official UDC Headquarters)


BANG! BANG!: Electric Sex: CDEP
A new band out of Chicago that is bringing back memories of '80s new wave with a bass player that sings like Terry Bozzio and music that has elements of early Devo and the Waitresses. Fun and a welcome change from all the death metal and thrash that I have been listening to lately. —Donofthedeath (Morphius)

BARS: Introducing...: CD
Considering how many times I've pointed out that merely listing bands that provided members for a project is the cheapest of a reviewer's many cheap tricks, I shouldn't be surprised that—for once—it bit me in the ass. The Bars includes members of The Hope Conspiracy, Give Up the Ghost, and the Suicide File, three of my favorite hardcore and punk bands of this decade to date, and it sounds like what you might expect from people steeped in rock and roll and the more vis-



This is a record player. It's installed in the dashboard of a car. It's like the future!

THESE ARE THE TOP 7'S SINCE THE LAST MAG.



Underground Medicine Mailorder, Connecticut

1. Reatards, *Plastic Surgery* (Shattered)
2. Observers, *Walk Alone* (Jonny Cat)
3. Catholic Boys, *Actin' Stupid* (No Fuckin' Chance)
4. Tokyo Electron, *Put a Charge in You* (Shattered)
5. Black Time, *Beat of the Traps* (Yakisana)
6. Nice Boys, *You Won't See Me Anymore* (Discourage)
7. Nervous Patterns, *Beautiful Brutal* (Zaxxon Virile Action)
8. DC Snipers/Shop Fronts, split (Your Permanent Records)
9. Tragicz, *Television Slave* (Hate)
10. Dissimilar, *Jimmy's Room* (Out of Order)

Damian of Fucked Up, who is a proud Pepsi enthusiast

1. Urban Blight, self-titled (Deranged)
2. Career Suicide, *Signals* (Slasher)
3. So Be It, *The Wrath of the Skies* (Deathwish, Inc.)
4. Observers, *Walk Alone* (Jonny Cat)
5. Haymaker, *Lost Tribes* (Deranged)
6. Clorox Girls, *The Dimension* (Jonny Cat)
7. Gorilla Angreb, self-titled (Feral Ward)
8. Lion of Judah, *Soul Power* (Lockin' Out)
9. Clusterfuck, *Midlife Crisis* (Wintermute)
10. Restless Youth, *State of Confusion* (Painkiller)

Disgruntled Mailorder, California

1. Dils, *198 Seconds of...* (Dangerhouse)
2. Functional Blackouts, *Chemical Bath* (Wrench)
3. Randoms, *ABCD* (Dangerhouse)
4. Jeffrey Novak's One Man Band, *Stranded* (Yakisana)
5. Real Losers/Illegal Movers, split (Ken Rock)
6. Beat Beat Beat, self-titled (Douche Master)
7. Earaches, *Freedumb Fries* (Steel Cage)
8. DC Sniper/Shop Fronts, split (Your Permanent Records)
9. Dean Dirge, *Chimpanzee* (Ken Rock)
10. Black Time, *Beat of the Traps* (Yakisana)

ceral side of hardcore (Black Flag and the *Funhouse*-era Stooges are two bands that spring most immediately to mind, but there are a handful of groups which exhibited a similar level of intensity and a similar approach to rock'n'roll damage and destruction). Simply put, this is a snarling, ferocious, steel-booted kick in the teeth—it's far more recidivist than most contemporary hardcore; instead of focusing on smooth, polished riffs and more standard modern hardcore production, it bristles with jagged edges, rock riffs, and menace. This is the Altamont to modern hardcore's Woodstock; as the Bars rampage through these blistering guitar-driven songs, it feels more like a bats-and-chains street fight than any recent form of punk. To my way of thinking, that makes this record even more enjoyable, precisely because it neither pulls punches nor takes the easy, commercial way out. Perhaps even more importantly and impressively, even though Bars includes members of a number of contemporary hardcore bands, it doesn't really sound like any of those bands—these musicians got together and created something different from what they had done in the past. While I can't call it new, it's still a very welcome rabbit punch of rock'n'roll. —Puckett (Equal Vision)

BENT OUTTA SHAPE:
***Stray Dog Town*: LP**

Don't get scared when I say Bent Outta Shape has *matured* from their tumbling 12"EP and early 7"s. They're not singing about mortgages, elbowing into sweater vests, and ordering lattes in Volvos. But, this LP is a marked departure from their delightfully rip-shod Toys That Kill meets Horrible Odds

debuts. First and foremost, it reminds me of the Replacements. Not just generically Replacement-esque, but a celebration of almost their entire catalog, cherry picked, distilled, and turned into a new form of DIY wine. The songwriting, although not as bombastic, and taking a couple of spins to let settle in, is just as compelling when they go fast and when they cool their heels. Megan Pants made the astute remark when listening to this: "It sounds old, like it came out awhile ago." And she's right—old not meaning bad. Curiously, this has all the earmarks of a landmark early '80s punk record without the distasteful smell of burned-out rehash. Bent Outta Shape have rediscovered a comfortable, exciting sound, one that I think got discarded before being fully explored. Why the hell not revive the ghosts and push them further than they went before? Excellent stuff. —Todd (Recess / Tapes Records)

BLACK COUGAR SHOCK UNIT: ***Godzilla Tripwire*: CD**

You can tell me to shut the fuck up about Panthro UK United 13 at any time, but the fact is that I've put *Sound of a Gun* on consistently since 1998. Maybe I should just get over it. But Alex's voice and guitar are distinctive as is Shane's drumming, and when I pop in House on Fire (whose debut EP ruled) or Black Cougar Shock Unit, I keep reflecting back to PUKU 13 and comparing and contrasting. And I've come to this conclusion: I don't like hard rock noodling in my punk. When Black Cougar Shock Unit blast from the gates, stomp holes in drywall, put the cat in the oven, and piss in the neighbors' ears while doing hand-clap-

ping push ups on the hoods of their victims' SUVs, I like them. When they start playing originals that remind me—rightly or wrongly—of "Wang Dang Sweet Poontang," I'm less than enthralled. I just don't like the wanking. I like it when they hit the afterburners. So, it's a 50/50 proposition. —Todd (Newest Industry)

BLACK COUGAR SHOCK UNIT: ***Hello Black Cougar Shock Unit*: CDEP**

I get the feeling this came out in kind of a hurry. Four originals (one not listed) and three covers, with pretty minimal artwork and absolutely no information save for a lyric sheet. I have no idea where this band is from or what kind of scene they're in. I'm totally in the dark. Having said that, this is pretty good. It's riffy, heavy rock that sounds like it's being made by ex-straightedge kids. Seriously, that's what it sounds like to me. Or kinda like the JJ Paradise Player's Club. The lyrics are real pissed off (in two of the songs, the words "go fuck yourself" appear several times) and the artwork is just altered Sanrio characters that must be one of the band's inside jokes or something. I didn't like the slower-and-wimpier cover of Devo's "Freedom of Choice" but I really liked the cover of Steve Martin's "King Tut." Hey guys, on the next record just put a little bit of information, okay? Postscript: A few days after I wrote this review, I got an email from my old buddy Mick. He told me he'd moved to Atlanta and joined a band with some ex-Panthro UK United 13 dudes called Black Cougar Shock Unit. Oh. —Ben Snakepit (Newest Industry)

BLACK HALOS:
***Alive Without Control*: CD**

It took me awhile to "get" the Black Halos. The lead singer, at first, sounds almost like a cartoon character with laryngitis. They definitely fit the Johnny Thunders, near-dead, spike-in-vein, blackened lips and eyes, pale-faced aesthetic. All fine and well, but the fact that they released the underrated and barely heralded magnum opus, *The Violent Years*, four years ago ratcheted them up several notches. *The Violent Years* sound like Thunders, except with compassion for a struggling culture beyond his own devices. *Alive Without Control* is excellent: catchy, swaggering, and confident, and although I like gems on it like "Darkest Corners," I find myself reaching back and playing *The Violent Years* louder and louder. With that record, there just seems to be more lurking behind them all, like a feeling of being hunted. Who knows? It took me a good year to fully embrace the previous album. Maybe it'll take some more time drinking with this one to take full hold. I'm patient. —Todd (Liquor and Poker)

BLACK SUNDAY:
***Tronic Blanc*: CD**

Another side project of Alicja Trout, who has been involved with seemingly half of the records to come out of Memphis in the past five years. Here she's playing almost all the instruments herself and doing a pretty damn good job. At times, it sounds kind of like the Mouserocket album and at others, it sounds like a lo-fi Lost Sounds outtake. I can't promise it'll blow your mind—I mean, you can pretty much just read the first sentence of the review and decide



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whether or not you need this—but she writes good songs and has a good voice and that's about all you can ask for. If you're unfamiliar with her musical efforts, a good primer is the *Black Wave* album that the Lost Sounds put out a couple years back and then this would be your next logical step. —Josh (Dirtnap)

BLARE BITCH PROJECT:
Double Distortion Burger: CD

In the vein of Los Angeles nightclub cock rock, this record delivers the goods but with only half the cocks. It's high-octane rock'n'roll with heavy slatherings of rawk, but one can still sense the ghost of Gene Vincent lurking somewhere behind all the power chords. Not, perhaps, one for the ages, but if records are like lovers, this is that wild girl you went out with for two weeks and smile about for the rest of your life. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Steel Cage)

BLASTOFFS, THE:
Sin to Win: CD

Stripped down, no-frills punk'n'roll with a crushing low end that makes me want to break shit. At times it becomes a bit dull and formulaic, but not that often, and some of these tunes knock me over like a swift kick in the nutsack, but in a good way. —The Lord Kveldulfr (The Blastoffs)

BLOOD IN BLOOD OUT:
Respect Our Loyalty: CD

Musically, I love hardcore music. You get the heavy guitar riffings of metal and the anger of punk. Lyrically, I find it amusing that there is so much posturing about loyalty and such. Like it's a self-esteem problem and you have to over-compensate to show that you belong.

You will most likely never find me at a hardcore show. From what I have seen in the past and seen on videos, I could not stand the crowd with all that machismo going around. In terms of music though, I'm pretty easy going. I usually focus on the music. As long as it's not racist, sexist, or lyrically remedial in the fourth grade sense, I can usually listen. I like to bang my head sometimes, so this does appeal to me. With a great recording, the guitars are crunchy and the bass and drums are solid. Adding musician-ship, these chaps know how to play and write some mighty mean tunes. Everything I like in a band like Strife is represented here. Full of energy and rage. —Donofthedeath (Spook City)

BLOOD, THE: False Gestures for a Devious Public: CD

Having only previously heard "Such Fun" on one of the oi compilations and "Stark Raving Normal" on another comp I forget the name of, the rest of this disc, a reissue of their album, was a bit of a surprise. Although there's quite a bit of metal in them geetars, there's a definite Peter and the Test Tube Babies feel to much of the tuneage here, a good chunk of which thrashes along in wild abandon. The lyrics, for the most part, are either pointed potshots at the pope or of the cleverly dumb variety hell-bent on offending as much of the population as possible, an approach that is heartily encouraged in these parts. The addition of assorted bonus tracks from singles, comps, and demos make this a nice overview of the band's career. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

BLOWFLY: Fahrenheit 69: CD

Blowfly, a contemporary of '70s X-rated comedians like Rudy Ray

"Dolemite" Moore, dishes up a bevy of rap and soul flavored tracks addressing booger-picking, sex, gay Black Republicans, ugly people, and "The Great Debate" (which is better: older or younger pussy?), with the word "cunt" sprinkled liberally throughout and vignettes explaining what he will do to improve the state of the country when elected president. The results are a bit of a mixed bag. When it works, like on "I Believe My Dick Can Fly," the results are pretty funny, but when it doesn't, it sounds like he was just trying to come up with enough material to reach the half-hour mark. —Jimmy Alvarado (Alternative Tentacles)

BLOWTOPS:
Mad Monk Medication: 7"

Two wild, fuzzed-the-fugg-out ravers that preen and pirouette on the fine line between noise, punk, and balls-out rock'n'roll. The tune on the flip is a slow, twisted slab o' psycho pop that decides every so often to whop you upside the head with a noisy interlude. I'm impressed. —Jimmy Alvarado (Big Neck)

BOMBSHELLS, THE:
Self-titled: CD

What better way to start a Saturday morning than with some punk rock record reviewin' and tending to some personal hygiene? Kill two birds with one stone, or Bombshell, if you will. The first verse of "She's Coming" sounds so much like the Problematics "Here We Come" that I started singing "And it happens all the ti-i-i-me..." when it came time for the chorus while listening to this in the shower. I shampooed my hair and washed my face to "I Want You Mine" and "Oh Yeah," work-

ing my way down to the armpits, crotch, and thighs without taking too much notice of the music: catchy, poppy, punky, in the same vein as Sloppy Seconds (from whom they ripped off a number of guitar leads) and Forgotten Rebels (from whom they pilfered the slowed-down, heartfelt intro to "I Want You Mine" and nose-plugged-full-of-snot vocal delivery), sans the inspired song writing and stunted, juvenile senses of humor that made those bands great. I began cleansing my anus as "One Track Mind" cued up. Not bad. Certainly my favorite song on the CD. The cruel twist is that my affinity for the song and proximity of hand-to-rectum have been intertwined, creating a bizarre, Pavlovian response whereupon hearing it, I'm filled with a desperate urge to cram a few fingers into my asshole. Son of a bitch, I'm never showering with these guys again. And, fellas, if yer gonna call yerselves the Bombshells, the least ya could do is put a smokin' hot babe on the cover. That Miguel Hell ain't so easy on the eyes. —Josh Benke, Cultural Ambassador (No Front Teeth)

BROKEN BONES: Time for Anger, Not Justice: CD

All right, I'll admit it: I'm easily confused. But it's taken me several orbits around our sun to realize that that's a "good thing." As human beings go, I seem to be some sort of rough fish that swims best in muddied waters where things are not clear and uncertainty prevails. So whereas your typical buttoned-up music critic might have his bloomers bunched around his ass regarding this disc—I am splashing about with stupid bullhead abandon. The rub of uncertainty, in the case of these Broken Bones

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gents, is as follows: this is a band I know very little about, but it seems to me that they have been allied with Wattie and the Exploited and have even had, at times, an ex-Exploited member or two in their ranks. We all know that Wattie is, under a heat lamp, about as bright as a bag of horse boogers and rumors have continued to circulate that he is a door-to-door salesman for a White Power organization called Blood & Honour. What does this have to do with Broken Bones? Very little, I hope. It's just that the way I've always heard it: Broken Bones, Exploited, and Discharge are/were like Siamese triplets attached at the ass. That means what flows through one, flows through the others and that might very well include a gene for vicious canine stupidity. At very least, judging by the album artwork, they certainly share with Wattie an adolescent fixation with human skulls. But maybe that's about all they share. The lyrics of songs like "G8" and "Justify War" would seem to indicate, unless I'm missing out on some delicate British sarcasm, that these gents actually fall somewhat left of center and therefore, they would be unlikely to foster any unorthodox sexual fetishes involving Adolf Hitler's smart little mustache. Bottom line is that this music makes me envision shirtless goons with big hairy shoulders and too few teeth beating the droppings out of a bunch of Promise Keeper/Ken Jennings types in a dark alleyway. And music that makes me think happy thoughts like that always warms the cockles of this old bullhead heart of mine. Bones and the boys serve up Woolly Mammoth slabs of metallic hardcore similar in heft to that of the Exploited but, thankfully, without the retard-o-centric trimmings of their bottom-feeding kinfolk. Ask Oprah: guilt-free hardcore is a beautiful thing. —Aphid Peewit (Dr. Strange)

BRUTAL KNIGHTS: Not Fun: 7" EP

Canadian, punk-informed, hairy-voiced, Lemmy-lovin' rock, matching the sensibilities and sounds of Minneapolis's Midnight Evils. So, it's not ironic. It's not tedious. It's not precious. They've got the good sense to shear off the solos, their songs are as sturdy as the buttons on a denim jacket, and they fly the punk and roll flag proudly. Not bad. Geek note: They appropriated the Volt Records label for the 45. —Todd (Deranged)

BUCKET FULL OF TEETH: IV: CD

Rubber gorillas fight fluttering birdies on the lip of a spitting volcano. A dwarf in chain mail stands by, grinding his jaundiced teeth, and tosses ping pong balls into the crater where they incinerate in whispers, inches above the roiling lava. A dogcatcher pounds, intermittently, on the dwarf's dented helmet with a bronzed horse dick, pausing now and then to shift the weight of the bricks taped to the back of his sweater. The alpha gorilla got gum in his hair. —Cuss Baxter (Level Plane)

CANDY SNATCHERS, THE: Ugly on the Outside: CD

I start to sound like an annoying, skipping record whenever I speak of The Candy Snatchers, so I'm gonna keep it to a minimum and only speak of the few things these nutjobs have done oh-so-well over the years. One, they continue

to make fantastic recordings, and two, when ripping it up live, they continue to make believers of those who think that rock and roll has gone off like an ailing cat to hide and die. These few things, by the way, are the only things that truly matter when being a band to begin with. Everything else is hot fucking air. This said, the disc here is a Hungry Man®-sized portion of singles, tribute LP cuts, and the like from their past offerings. Surefire cuts that'll result with someone's foot through the drywall at your next house party are "You Want What," "Picture My Face," and the rip-roaring cover of Mr. David Bowie's "Suffragette City." Like their r'n'r colleagues Motörhead, the Ramones, Throw Rag, or The Riverboat Gamblers, anything Candy Snatchers isn't just a no-brainer, it's essential. —Designated Dale (Roulettes)

CAPITAL DEATH: Carbon: 7"

In another review somewhere around here I said that I couldn't handle that crusty, growly grind stuff. I stand by that, but this record brings up an interesting point (to me, anyways). How is it that I *do* like crusty, screamy political hardcore stuff? Both are, for the most part, annoying and unintelligible, yet the latter just seems more, you know, PUNK, I guess. At any rate, Capital Death play screamy, crust political punk that will suit me just fine when the mood strikes me. Somehow I knew these guys were Canadian just by hearing them. Confirmation came well hidden in the liner notes. Strange. —Ty Stranglehold (Punks Before Profits)

CAREER SUICIDE: Invisible Eyes: 12"

I don't know how Career Suicide keeps putting out records like this, but HOLY FUCKING SHIT am I glad they're around. Unlike many of the hardcore bands from the early '80s that they emulate, who usually only managed one or two good albums, Career Suicide has yet to let me down. And at this point, they've blown away their influences, to the point where saying "rad Freeze/Circle Jerks kinda stuff" doesn't do them justice. As a matter of fact, I'll go ahead and say that if your taste in music ever veers towards the faster, more aggressive side of things, you need this record. Christ, this is a complete smoker, through and through. —Josh (Feral Ward, www.feralward.com)

CASKET LIFE: The Good Times Are Killing Me: CD

Heralded as a harbinger of the burgeoning (and long-suffering) Arizona punk scene, Casket Life is reminiscent of Filth, Minor Threat, and Egg Hunt. But don't call them emo. Or hardcore. And they're too clean looking to be street punx. They're just punks. And pretty darned good at it. It lacks some cohesion and I wasn't totally glued to it, but heck, they're young. It'll develop. Not bad at all. —Jessica T (Stomping Ground)

CASUALTIES: En la Línea del Frente: CD

Why this sad sack of a group manages to survive, let alone enjoy any modicum of popularity, is bound to be the subject of much future scientific research. I mean, c'mon kids, they are SUCH a piss poor joke, more the embodiment of every lame punk stereotype the media has invented thus far than an actual

noteworthy band. Nothing, NOTHING about them is remotely creative, original, or interesting. Their music is a hackneyed, Nth-generation Xerox copy of what some middle-aged TV exec thinks punk looks and sounds like and, ultimately, they are about as much a symbol of rebellion against the status quo as Avril Lavigne or Backstreet Boys. They are the purveyors of zero style, zippo substance and, not being satisfied with making a mockery of the English language, they have decided to profane Spanish with their insipid attempts at songwriting. You'd get more from staring at television static than you would listening to this. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sideonedummy)

CATCH, THE: Get Cool: CD

I sure have a soft spot for female vocals that are dreamy and pretty. The songs on this caught me right away. A little new wave, power pop, and some pop punk mixed together to make their brand of garage music. Reminded me what would happen if you put together Veruca Salt, Elastica, the Go Go's and the Breeders and send them to the bubblegum factory. Infectious. —Donofthedeat (Made in Mexico)

CELEBRITY MURDERS: The Island of Man-Eating Rats: one-sided, four-song 7" EP

Discomforting New York-based hardcore that takes its cues of loathing, pessimism, hatred (except of Mussolini, who's thanked), from early Agnostic Front (barely tuneful, all energy's in the attack, not putting on makeup) and early Sick Of It All (the shaved-down metal guitar, especially). It's less tough guy and more miscreant/bad attitude/infected boil/ stuck-behind-a-bad-driver-their-entire-lives, about-to-kill-the-next-fucker-who-doesn't-use-their-turn-signal vibe. Effective. Artie from the Shemps is singing, but it sounds nothing like the Shemps. —Todd (Chainsaw Safety)

CHARIOTS: Congratulations: CD

Even with the keyboards this sounds too screamo for my liking. —Donofthedeat (Troublemanunlimited)

CHIXDIGGIT!: Pink Razors: CD

I believe we all go through phases in life. I have been in the metal/trash mode lately. But I'm not rigged. On the first track of this CD, I wrote this off as NOFX. But the second track, "I Remember You," sucked me in. What a great pop song! I can hear this one getting popular on alternative radio and making me feel sick because others are discovering my dirty little secret. It's a song that will live longer than the band, a song so perfect that it sticks in your cranium for hours because it's so catchy. I really don't have to listen to the rest of the CD because I found a song that I will listen to for the rest of my lifetime. I have become a believer of their abilities to write a great melody. Anyone who can put a smile on this old bitter guy's face is a band you have to check out if you want something more on the pop tip. —Donofthedeat (Fat)

CHROME PISTOLA: Victimize Yourself: CDEP

Reminds me of those jerks that sang "The Bad Touch." The singer's (singers'?) delivery is flat (he/they rap

the first song) and he has a range of about five notes. Funky soul music should have attitude and be brought to you with a heapin' helpin' of stank! Sadly, there is no stank to be found on this release. —Josh Benke, Cultural Ambassador (Mindless)

COLTRANE MOTION: No Well OK Maybe Just a Little: CDEP

Four "tracks" of fairly enjoyable, fairly "mellow" electronic "music" which, if it hasn't "happened" already, I'm sure I'll "appreciate" as the perfect "soundtrack" when I hear it on a "Volkswagen" "commercial." —Cuss Baxter (datawaslost)

COMMANDANTES: Lieber für Die Arbeiterklasse: CD

Commie street punk from Germany. Can't say I'm all that hip to the commie trip, but I do respect 'em for taking a road not often traveled in punklandia. —Jimmy Alvarado (Mad Butcher)

CONFLICT: There Is No Power Without Control: CD

While I'll be the first to admit (before my homies call me on it) I've never been much of a Conflict fan (based more on musical, rather than political, differences of opinion), I gotta say it's mighty fine hearing these guys making a racket again. One of England's premier anarcho punk bands that has been perplexingly lumped into the "street punk" ghetto for some reason in recent years, Conflict took the template laid out by contemporaries like Crass (with whom they shared a lead singer, although not at the same time), ratcheted up the intensity levels and tempos, and belched forth angry sheets of noisy punk that railed against the government, animal abusers, war, and corporations poised to take over the world. Given the fact that many of the very things they were attacking twenty years ago have, in some cases, become the norm, it will come as no surprise that their latest album is chock full of musical assaults on that very same power structure. Musically, they are just as harsh as they ever were, but after more than a decade of sugar-coated boy-pop preening and posturing as if it was somehow punk, their brand of sonic bludgeoning actually comes off as fresh and invigorating. Good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (SOS)

CONVERGE: Petitioning the Empty Sky: CD When Forever Comes Crashing: CD

Re-mastered and re-issued, these Converge records—now more than seven years old—still destroy and still dominate the ham-fisted and fumbling attempts to create truly heavy music. These albums may not have been the genesis of metallic hardcore (depending on what you consider metallic hardcore) but they are undoubtedly essential flash-points. These two records are pretty much crucial if you like punk, metal, hardcore or music. —Puckett (Equal Vision)

CRANKED UP!: This Is a Weapon: CD

A successful return to old. It's been a long, long time since I came across an overtly politi-punk band that I found satisfying, but Cranked Up! fit the bill. The lyrics revolve around different metaphors and means of resisting authority/the state/the reactionary, etc.,

but don't really come off as clichéd—a real danger in such situations—and they're put to some truly energetic and catchy punk; all in all, a good package. The liner notes do provide little blurbs about the songs, though, and that irks me 'cause as I see it, if you need to explain your lyrics then your lyrics haven't done the job in the first place. I'll let that go, though, since the rest of the record merits my approval. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Creep)

CUT CITY: Self-titled: CD

No track names and zippo band information with this one, which is annoying, but no matter. This is a nice bit of indie pop with a smidge of lighter Sonic Youth fare in some places and a dash of '80s twee in others, neither of which become so overbearing as to overshadow the band's own strengths. Charming enough to grab your attention and catchy enough to keep it. —Jimmy Alvarado (GSL)

DAN BAND, THE: Live!: CD

In the day and age of *American Idol* and karaoke, it's an easier sell when you hear someone covering a song that you have heard before. So add the gimmick that a man covers songs sung by women adds to the flair. Now picture going to Vegas and seeing a revue performed by Billy Joel of his favorite hits performed by women and this what you get. More fun actually being there, but I can picture myself pulling this out when I'm vacuuming the house. I have no shame. —Donofthedeat (Side One Dummy)

DAN MELCHIOR: Hello, I'm Dan Melchior, aka Singer-Songrater: CD

It's about what you'd expect when a guy makes a record with his wife instead of his ragged rock band; reduced volume and velocity, introspective lyrics set to contemplative arrangements (though pretty dense arrangements much of the time—while the sound isn't really close, there are certain stylistic and conceptual similarities to Royal Trux), acoustic guitars and pianos, and the performer's own visual art. I can't quibble with most of it, and genuinely like a couple tracks (particularly the bouncy "Americana Strip Mall Rag"), but repeated listens draw attention to just that: repetition. Melchior, on this record, tends to beat certain lines into the ground, which puzzles me as he's clearly smart enough to write a whole song's worth of words. Ultimately that repetition will be the reason I won't play this record much. —Cuss Baxter (Shake It)

DAREDIABLO: Twenty Paces: CD

While formulaic alt-country in appearance (map of Texas, muddy boot, catchy name, and song titles like "Billy Got Worse" and "Nife Fite on Wife Nite"), I was quite perplexed when I read that *the Village Voice* called Daredevil a "jazz-funk prog-rock trio." I groaned audibly—what a nightmare. Surprisingly, this instrumental three-piece act is harmonious and well synchronized: a little metal, a little soul, and a little rock—with zero artsy pretentiousness (that's the best part). Constant attention is given to all emotions as they whisk up and down a river of pensive and perpetual moodiness. I almost tossed this one, but my affection for excellent instrumental groups such as Pell Mell forbade me from

doing so without at least giving it a listen. Not bad for what it is. —Jessica T (Southern)

DARKBUSTER:

A Weakness for Spirits: CD

If you love catchy, drunk punk that'll stick to the top of your brain and you'll keep on singing along to for years, I highly suggest Darkbuster's side of the their split with Tommy and the Terrors on Rodent Popsicle that came out several years ago. That shit fuckin' smokes. I was stoked to get this. I was disappointed when I played it. Gone is the feeling of guys who are—in the form of songs—breaking full pitchers of beer over your head and you can't stop smiling. Gone is the feeling—again, in the form of songs—of spilt beer in a full ashtray and they would gulp it up without a second thought; that liquid, dirty, sloppy, fun spirit. No judgement on the personalities behind the band, but this is just "pro" in all the wrong ways, where fun has been replaced by calculation. There's their take writing a Rancid-esque song. There's their take on a Social Distortion-esque song. There's their take on writing a Dropkick Murphys-esque song. There's their take on writing a song for armed forces recruitment. And it's all polished to a high sheen, like a brand new guitar, covered in perfectly placed, highly deliberated, unscuffed stickers. Sounds untrue. And what I wanted was more Darkbuster playing Darkbuster. And getting hit in the head by a pitcher again. It pains me to say this, but I'm wholeheartedly disappointed, even after listening to it ten times over. Fuckin' bummers. —Todd (www.darkbuster.net)

DEAD BETTIES: Summer of '93: CD

Given the band name and the album title, I fully expected some lame pop punk tripe. What I got was skronky noise punk. I guess sometimes you really can't judge a book by its cover. —Jimmy Alvarado (Heartcore, no address)

DEAD CELEBRITIES: Cleanup on Aisle: CD

After a six-year run as one of the premier bands on the St. Louis punk scene, the Dead Celebrities broke up in early 2005. This album, the group's only full-length studio release, is a memorable mix of fury and humor. Guitarist Elvis Kennedy creates jaggedly powerful riffs and John Paul Nixon is a stand-out drummer. The band's sound bears a resemblance to the music of the UK Subs and the Skulls, and vocalist Sid Sinatra is a witty voice of exasperation. The first song on the album is "Bail," a breakneck hardcore rant about a disagreement with a policeman. The track would make a worthy pairing with T.S.O.L.'s "Anticop" on a punk compilation album about law enforcement. (There's an idea.) "Sweet Love Song" moves at equally high speed and is probably *Cleanup's* funniest track, with its mock-angry chorus of "Your ugly baby shoulda been mine." Fittingly, the song with the most anthemic chorus, "Dead Celebrities," is also the most tongue-in-cheek. It may also be the only piece of music to reference Winston Churchill, John Holmes, and Moe from *The Three Stooges*. Sinatra's vocal meltdowns and ironic lyrics are equally strong, and the music is infectious throughout. As this album shows, the Dead Celebrities played smart-assed punk at its finest. —Chris Pepus (Fat Fish)

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DEADBOLT: Haight Street Hippie Massacre: CD

Proudly "Made in USA," this 2003 retrospective thoughtfully covers all eras of Deadbolt's arguably productive career. Includes staples like "Who the Hell is Mrs. Valdez?" "Tiki Man," "Hit Gone Wrong" and "Truck Driving SOB." Tossed in for good measure are several previously unreleased tracks: "I Saw the King," "Go Tell Alice," "Edie," and "Listen to the Message." For added value, a cover of Burt Bacharach's "Rain Drops Keep Falling on My Head" has been tacked on at the end. Dedicated fans worldwide have had most of this material for quite some time, but newcomers will appreciate the comprehensive peek down in the lab, especially since the liner notes include a complete roster of everyone who has ever been in or with the band. Remorsefully, some of my favorite songs aren't included: "The Day I Got My Spine Back," "Slap," "Creepy and Weird," and "Twang Zombie." —Jessica T (Cargo)

DEADLY, THE: The Wolves Are Here Again: CD

Competently crafted and produced metallic screamo hardcore. While "These Are Cherry Blossoms" breaks into a stellar melodic bridge which combines the usual chaos of the genre with something resembling a hook, this record strikes me as an average representation of the style. If you're a newcomer to screamo or metallic hardcore, I wouldn't suggest starting here. —Puckett (Pluto)

DEATH BY STEREO: Death for Life: CD

DBS continue to be one of my favorite bands that wear the Pantera and Iron

Maiden flag on their sleeves, refusing to give a rat's fat ass what you or anyone else thinks of them. Way talented and way heavy, DBS have proven record after record that they can and will play circles around most of those crapacular bands screen printed on back of that OzzFest T-shirt you had to spend two months worth of your lunch money on. Punk rock spirit with a full dose of metal up your ass. And that's good metal, not that hair band pose 'n wank shitty pap metal. Metal that bassists Lemmy Kilmister and Tom Araya have christened us with. Choice cuts here to mow your car through Korn and Slipknot's merch stands are "This Curse of Days," "Middle Fingers," and "Binge/Purge." The Torrez is fully backing the DBS, so that alone should get your ass in gear. Viva DBS! Viva Torrez! YL in the house! —Designated Dale (Epitaph)

DEMON CITY WRECKERS: Inner Demons: CD

I rolled my eyes. A psychobilly/punk band with a blank-city-noun name. What will they sing about? Aliens, zombies, necromancy, surfing on Mars, and maybe a murder or two after a trip to the asylum? Au contraire, this is good. Really good. Not perfect, but they will be—and soon. This Tucson foursome is creepy but not campy, disturbed but not mental, deeply pained and tightly wound. Their pressure-cooker steam is slowly relieved—a controlled explosion, a slow burn, cathartic. Vocally reminiscent of the Murder City Devils, the Demon City Wreckers blow past the pretentiousness of the usual RAB/psycho outfits while still incorporating the expected elements—a steady rhythm section (the

stand-up player actually knows more than one bass line), metallic guitar, and heady, emotive vocals, albeit a bit strained at times. But it works. Deep, throaty, rumbling, tight, and mesmerizing from numerals 1 to X. Catchy and rockin' on "Left for Dead," driving and pounding on "Inner Demons" and fantastically "Love You to Death"-esque (Meteors) on "Thirty-ninth and Norton," presumably the homicide song. ("The sun came up today, as I drove away, I think they just found out about me. Blood stains on dirty sheets, rolled up in my back seat.") Should they be graced with fortitude (and better production), they'll be around blasting your ears for years. My kind of rockin'. —Jessica T (Psychobilly US)

DESTRUX:

Enter the Thrash Kick: CDEP

While this would be considered by many to be fairly generic thrashy hardcore and even though it sounds like it was recorded in someone's laundry room, it won me over with its unbridled energy and catchiness. I also like how they manage to attack "the system" and support "the system" simultaneously, like in this line: "we thrash the system and all the things we hate but we like to do rad things too, like drink Coke, play Nintendo, and we like to skate." Product placement and punk always go great together. So is this a Good Clean Fun type of put-on or are these really just half-witted teenagers obsessed with skating and attacking/supporting giant corporations? I guess it doesn't matter to me, because I have entered the thrash kick and I like it, whether their heads really are up their asses or not. —Aphid Peewit (Blood Money)

DIALS, THE: Sick Times: CDEP

Falling somewhere between 1960s mod (is that a Farfisa?) and 1990s riot grrrl, the songs are jagged, angular, busted beer bottles of music. They're loose, simple, and raw, sounding like people figuring out how to play instruments while writing songs in a garage, unfettered by ideas of how something should be done and, instead, creating what sounds good. That isn't to say that this sounds amateurish, merely that it reminds me of early punk bands creating in a vacuum of interest when the possibilities were still open and the horizons of what a band could do hadn't been narrowed by commercial prospects. —Puckett (The Dials, www.thedials.us)

DIRTBOMBS, THE: If You Don't Already Have a Look: 2 x CD

There are few current bands that can look so sweepingly and non-ironically into the past, specifically at the roots of soul and rock'n'roll, and not only do it justice, but plant a new flag in its ass. The Dirtbombs' deep love of music that moves is obvious. The two CDs are separated into originals and covers—fifty-two (!) tracks in all. I don't have a favorite CD, and that's another element that makes them so special. I appreciate their own take on what a modern band can do with such a rich history to tap from, but, man, I also love the fact that they cover such a wide umbrella of music that wouldn't or couldn't be covered by a less adventurous and confident band. Cheater Slicks, Smokey Robinson, Flipper, Gun Club, Soft Cell, The Ohio Players, and the English Beat

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are all given the treatment in such a way that it's easy to come to the conclusion, "Shit, I never thought of listening to them like that. Maybe I should re-listen. I must have missed something." And whenever a band is that strong, you know they're onto something big. The Dirtbombs make so many other bands sound puny. —Todd (In the Red)

DIRTBOMBS: Merit b/w Mystified (Version): 7"

Mick Collins' got stank. On "Merit," he's got the panty-wetting growl, the smoke and assurance voice of a man who knows where he stands: tall, in charge, and proud. And when you play anything flirting with soul and rock, like the Dirtbombs do, they gotta make you—the listener—to want to get hip-wigglin' stinky. They gotta bring the gospel, to spread both the word and legs. On this song, they're Booker T and the MG's precise (their meticulousness just further sharpens their blade) and I've if there's any justice in this world, Otis Redding's smiling down in their direction from above. The b-side is a dub reggae song. Starts off sounding like tugboats in the mist and then there's a lot of reverb. I'll be playing the a-side a ton. —Todd (Kapow)

DISENGAGE: Application for an Afterlife: CD

First off, the facts. 1) Derek Hess cover. 2) Nice packaging. 3) Musically, picture Tool and Boy Sets Fire in a swinging-dick contest. 4) This CD includes a video in which "action shots" of the band, like, rocking out are interspersed with shots of some dude scribbling over anatomical drawings while a blonde woman, wearing what is commonly referred to as a wifebeater, throws wads

of paper at him. Then she gives him a grenade. That sort of vapidity permeates the entire record, and I'm left with a really, really bad feeling about this band. Lyrically, I know it's often difficult to bridge the chasm between obscurity and obviousness, but these dudes just go all the way for obscurity. I honestly don't know what they're shooting for here. I mean, in the song "District 2 Electric Boogaloo" the guy sings, "Baby cars but beat your babies, don't get priorities straight/ Bingo stars, they cut in line, celebrities to the extreme/ Are you Ghetto or Gummo?" and, "The church is packed; the windows are still cracked/ Time to forgive, use that change you found last night/ It's time to eat, hungry mouths will complain/ So meet and greet, you're all scum, you should get along." What the fuck is that? Vapid shit like that is all over the place on this record—are these guys really saying that inner-city churchgoers are "scum?" That in the ghetto, everyone has nice cars but beat the shit out of their kids? I mean, I'm not the quickest whip in town, but I'm not dumb either, and I really can't tell what they're getting at. I assume the song "Bruise" is about the aftermath of September 11, but I can't tell if they're honestly claiming they want to see "two towers climbing." Do they really feel that we should "return the bodies to loving families and start rebuilding immediately?" And I'm sure a lot of folks in Afghanistan would be thrilled and relieved to know that 9/11 was simply "another crisis (that has been) put out to pasture." In "Cover the Globe," are they lamenting or applauding the "slaughter" of "faith-based programs?" There are a hundred other sketchy examples throughout this record—if they're shooting for a

tongue-in-cheek, "devil's advocate" sort of lyrical attack, they missed the mark by being way too fucking vague. And if they're sincere, it just goes to show you that even dipshit Republicans go to tat-too shops. —Keith Rosson (Fractured Transmitter)

DISORDER: The Riot City Years: CD

An assortment of early tracks from the series of EPs the band put out on Riot City back in the '80s, which translates into twenty tracks of primitive, blissfully sloppy UK punk that essentially mines the same territory as early Discharge and, especially, the equally crucial Chaos UK—no frills, no metal, just pure, balls to the wall, noisy as hell hardcore. —Jimmy Alvarado (Step-1 Music)

DISSIMILARS, THE: Jimmy's Room: 7"

I reviewed this band's demo a while back and I said that I couldn't wait for them to put out some vinyl. Now I don't have to wait anymore. And, while it's inexplicably lacking in Venom and Flag of Democracy riffs, it's still great, fuzzy, bopping garage rock that sounds pretty much like all those great bands that came out of the Southwest in the mid-'90s like the Drags, the Inhalants, and the Motards. It may seem like a disservice to compare them to so many other bands, but with this kind of stuff, there's not really anything new. However, I am pretty burned out on the we-used-to-love-the-Infections-but-now-we-love-Sonic-Youth stuff and it's awesome to know that bands are still playing this kind of simple, straightforward punk rock with those catchy guitar parts that we can whistle to ourselves while we

clean the pool at the YMCA. And I hear they're straight edge. —Josh (Out of Order)

DOLLYROTS, THE: Eat My Heart Out: CD

Eat My Heart Out is bursting at the seams with an assault of yeah-yeahs, crunching guitars, heavy handclaps, and soaring, sugary harmonies. Able to melt tired punk rock hearts in a single bound! L.A.'s version of Sahara Hotnights got me to love them forever and it only took an instant. —Kat Jetson (Panic Button)

DOWNBEAT 5, THE: Victory Motel: CD

...boy, i dunno. As much as i liked what i heard off the first album, and as much as i am inclined to believe that J.J. Rassler generally does good work, all i hear here (note clever Hollies reference) is—quote me on this—A BUNCH OF ROCK (the band is welcome to take this as a compliment, though it was not intended as such). I mean, if the Paybacks are AC/DC—and who's to say they're not?—then the Downbeat 5 are now April Wine. Great. We'll call you when we need another favor, or a theme for homecoming or something. This situation is hardly helped by the inclusion of a way-too-Blondie Shangri-La's number, "Out in the Streets," but, *suddenly! Without prior notification!* At the exact moment that one would assume the vinyl equivalent of the CD would commence side two (well, okay, there's ten songs. I figure "side two" starts on track 6. If you fault my math, show me yours), the record, shockingly, stops sucking. The band abruptly drops the loathsome and undistinguished "A BUNCH OF ROCK" bit, and resumes the high energy, sweet 'n' crunchy r'n'r

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hijinx of their earlier efforts with "Army of One," following it up with a second (!) Shangri-La's cover, this time "Dum Dum Ditty," a song far more to my liking than the semi-retarded "Out in the Streets" (*exactly*, "Dum Dum Ditty" is superior to "Out in the Streets" because "Out in the Streets" is semi-retarded, and "Dum Dum Ditty" is *ALL THE WAY* retarded. You know me too well, Montresor!). These two resounding avengements of the first side's unmeasurable shititude are followed by "Lonesome Town," a cool cover ballad whose origins I cannot place, and another quality original ("Climbin' the Walls"), but the last song is a repeat dose of the Rock Dross of the first side, and thus cannot be abided. All I can think of is that this band saw the Paybacks, marveled (understandably) at their greatness, and, in their youthful (er...) vigor, attempted a sort of ill-advised emulation that they will, in due time, look back upon with proper embarrassment. Please record another album when you are feeling better. **BEST SONG:** "Dum Dum Ditty" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Dum Dum Ditty" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** The Imperial 400 Motel—depicted on the top of the album's back cover—stands (albeit in more dilapidated form), to this day, *directly across the street* from my PO Box. Once, me and Michael Lucas hung out there and watched Dan Quayle give a speech to a bunch of farmers in Iowa on TV. It was fun. —Rev. Nørb (Abbey Lounge)

DR. CHUD'S XWARD: *Diagnosis for Death: CD*

I remember the day I gave up on the Misfits. I was sitting in a diner,

wrestling was on the TV, and I saw Jerry Only and Doyle gleefully squirting ketchup and mustard on a fallen bad guy. That was it; the Misfits jumped the shark. Dr. Chud, former drummer of the new Misfits, is the physical incarnation of said shark jumping. Completely riding on his "fame" of being the drummer for a reformed band that was basically a parody of itself, he put together this atrocious CD of the most boring, run-of-the-mill bar rock I've ever heard. It doesn't sound like the Misfits. It doesn't sound like anything. Maybe a little bit like Alice in Chains, but a busted bunch-of-forty-year-old-construction-workers-that-jam-with-their-buddies-on-weekends-style Alice in Chains. Sorry Doc, crappy songs with lyrics about Frankensteins and stuff are still just crappy songs. I hereby give this album the ultimate dis! It sucks! —Ben Snakepit (Bloodwork)

DRIVEWAY SPEEDING: *Reasons Are Not Answers: CDEP*

Through the years I have really latched onto certain labels, Crackle being one of them. Even with genres that I might not like, they have released bands that I enjoy. I feel like they have a kindred spirit with my taste in music. A new band out of the UK, this band has members from bands that I have enjoyed from the past like Servo (who are incredible!) and Ohno Express. I have heard references to Leatherface thrown around. I can't use that one. I have no releases from said band and have made no effort on my part to listen to them. I have seen them once live. But what I do know is that these guys know how to keep things mellow but

write some great songs with a good sense of melody. While keeping things on the raw side, the magic of the music carries the flag in a bold manner. Like later period Hüsker Dü and what I know of the Replacements, this band play a melodic rock that has enough elements of punk to keep me satisfied. —Donofthedeath (Crackle)

DUPLEX: *Album: CD*

The members of a grade school and high school play got together in one room, made up some stuff (rapidly), pushed the record button and let the tape roll for about an hour. That's probably not exactly what happened, but it sure as hell sounds like it. With such musical numbers entitled "Salad Song," "Multiplication Treehouse," and "Heatin' Up the Milk," it's easy to pass this one up—unless, of course, you're shopping for your five-year-old niece. FYI, this recording was "...made possible through the assistance of the Canada Music Fund and the Music Section of the Canada Council for the Arts." Canada should seek a refund. —Kat Jetson (Mint)

EASY ACTION: *Friends of Rock and Roll: 7"*

Easy Action's singer, John Brannon, has an unquestionable pedigree. From being in one of the bar-none best hardcore bands of all time, Negative Approach, to the gargling nails, hard-driving powerhouse of the Laughing Hyenas, there's no doubt that his dues have been paid and his time has been served. For me, Easy Action flirts on that same edge of rock'n'roll as the Antiseen. I appreciate what they're doing, but half the time it's hard to sustain enthusiasm. Easy Action are rough

and growly and thuddy. They're definitely not sugaring anything, but, musically, they can be pretty standard, repetitive, and a couple ticks too slow for me to really get behind. Wanted to like this more. —Todd (Reptilian)


EERIE VON: *Bad Dream #13: CD*

Poor Eerie Von. He was the Misfits' roadie, then he got to play bass in Samhain. When Samhain turned into Danzig, Eerie lucked out and made the cut (I guess sticking it out through *Final Descent* paid off for him.) But, at some point right after *Danzig IV* came out, Eerie must've done something to piss Glenn off, 'cause he got kicked out of Danzig, and ever since he's been like a ghost, occasionally drifting by with a solo album like this one. It's apparent that Eerie wasn't the secret songwriting talent in either Samhain or Danzig, 'cause this CD pretty much relies on tricks to get by. Tricks, I imagine, that Eerie learned from Glenn during the keyboard-and-drum-machine phase of *Final Descent*. Tricks borrowed from the bullshit that Glenn is trying to pass off as Danzig these days. Pretty much, this record sounds like a dude dicking around on a four track. And that's pretty much what it is. —Ben Snakepit (Ghastly)

EMERGENCY: *1234: CD*

So far as I'm able to reckon, this is a modern Canadian skin band that eschews the requisite odes to drinking, blind patriotism, and right-wing warmongering in favor of swipes at the vapidness of factory life, the army, the United States government, and the homogenization of western society. Musically, the band recycles more than

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their share of riffs, but, on the whole, the tunes work and they sound considerably more authentic than the majority of their bald contemporaries. I dig 'em. —Jimmy Alvarado (Step-1 Music)

EPOXIES, THE:
***Stop the Future:* CD**

I may not be able to articulate as well as others at this here mag in regards to this band. But I was highly anticipating this release to review and listen. I missed the debut 7" that sold real quick. But the dudes at Razorcake HQ made sure that I heard their self-titled full length. I was blown away like a scrap piece of newspaper on a windy day. That release had a long stay in the CD changer. A lot of bands are playing the second wave of new wave, but like any scene, only a few stand out. This band stands out. On this sophomore release, the production is much stronger and the songwriting has shown a continued maturity. They still have an amazing knack of creating and capturing the melody so that the songs are memorable and keep you humming. The guitars are much more prominent this time around and the quirkiness of the synths are not in the forefront but more complementary. In turn, the songs have more of a punch that you can feel from a distance. More rock and less novelty. Roxy Epoxy also sounds more confident in her vocal delivery. The vocals have more passion and I feel she gives the songs more emotional layers. Overall, they overcome the sophomore curse and put a release that is so much better than their previous product. If you haven't taken the time to check this band out in the past, now is the time. Portland is kicking some major ass with the latest wave of bands coming out! —Donofthedeat (Fat)

EPOXIES, THE:
***Stop the Future:* CD**

If anyone makes the snide remark that The Epoxies are an '80s rehash band, then their eyes must be dark brown due to the fact that they're full of shit. Yes, The Epoxies borrow a half-cup of this and dash in a bit of that from some of what reared its head in the '80s, but it's *what* they do with it that makes them so damn good when it comes to making records. There's the winding synth that's right in there with the pummeling rhythm section and rocking guitar, but it's a pleasing mix that ain't too rough/experimental, yet not too over-produced or slick like some of the clove cigarette smoke-filled, new-romantic dance hall slime that was spinning in the past. Roxy's singing is a bit hard to put a finger on, but try and think of a young Chrissie Hynde (Pretenders) with the vocal meter of a young Leonard Graves (Dickies). Kudos to the Fat Wreck Chords folks for getting this second rekkid out in the hands of soon-to-be-fans. While you're out doing yourself the favor of grabbing this, do yourself another and get their debut full length on Dirtnap. Both CDs will have you bobbing your head like a crack-ridden chicken in seconds flat (It's true—it happened to me the first time I saw them blow the roof off The Echo in L.A. a few years ago). —Designated Dale (Fat)

EATALS, THE: *Yeah Baby:* 7"

Dunno what it is about this label, but everything I've ever heard has either been over the top, flat-out rockin', or some combination thereof. Such is the case with these guys, who take the '60s trash thing, rip it to fucking shreds, and then piss all over the remains. If you're into having your ears scrubbed with

wire mesh while you rock out, this will more than do the trick. Good luck finding it, though, 'cause it'll no doubt be long gone by the time you read this, but I highly recommend you put in some extra effort to seek it out. —Jimmy Alvarado (Zaxxon Virile Action)

FEDERATION X:
***Rally Day:* CD**

Gritty rock with enough Sabbath-inspired sludginess smooshed in to give it a stoner sheen. Not bad. —Jimmy Alvarado (Estrus)

FIVE OUTSIDERS, THE:
***On the Run:* CD**

Soft and reverb-soaked cowpoke instrumental vistas as wide open as the high planes, drifting along like so many tumbleweeds. It's kind of like having the Ventures play the theme songs from all your favorite spaghetti westerns while you sit in a warm bath tub, smoking a ratty cigar with your cowboy boots on. Surprisingly refreshing. I bet it would go good with a bottle of Mescal. —Aphid Peewit (Acme)

FLEAS AND LICE:
***Recipes for Catastrophes:* CD**

It's a repress of the LP that was originally released by Skuld in Germany in 2001 by a long-running band from Holland that started in 1993 who continues today flying the flag of crust punk and DIY. Male/female dual vocals are up front of the exchanging the message of what pisses them off. Musically, mid-tempo to fast Discharge meets Nausea punk rock that a lot of bands are playing today. Never really got around to buying their stuff, but it's great to finally hear what they sound like after seeing so many of their patches on the kids these days. —Donofthedeat (Rodent Popsicle)

FOLSOM:
***If You're a Viper:* CDEP**

First thing as this blasts out of the speakers is the thought, "My dick is bigger than your dick!" The machismo is rampant on this one. Like a fight about to break out and the bravado is flying as two males take off their shirts ready for a full-on brawl. No lyric sheet shows that someone is not the most proud. On the bright side, the music is powerful. It delves into rap metal at times, but the metal/hardcore makes up for it. —Donofthedeat (Spook City)

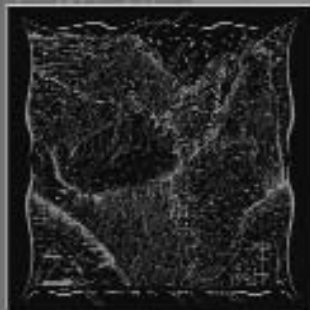
FUGUE, THE:
***Mysterious Animals:* CD**

Straight up noise rock mongering going on here with no attempts whatsoever to sugarcoat it. Whether it's good or not is dependent on your personal affection or aversion to this type of stuff, but if you're of a mind to crank this kinda shit up, you could do much worse. Now excuse me as I render myself deaf. —Jimmy Alvarado (RIYL)

FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS:
***Chemical Bath b/w Raw Dawg, Raw Deal + In My Vacuum:* 7"**

The a-side starts out with a chant, sprints into guitar-laden loopey loops, crashes at an intersection, unzips its pants, flops out a horn, goes back to the chant "Chem-i-cal, Chem-i-cal," pauses again, and blasts for a third and last time. It's part doses of the Clone Defects, the Tyrades, and the Thirteen Floor Elevators. My tolerance for "experimental rock" is limited, but the Blackouts succeed by the fact that they never forget to continue the "rock" part and keep pushing forward. The b-side is the more typical Functional Blackouts demolition derby. Lots of yellin'. Lots

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of bashing'. The feeling I get is that these folks would roll up a carpet after a show if there was enough beer to wring out of it, and drink in unhesitating, heavy gulps. Something definitely ain't right with 'em and that's what makes 'em so damn good. —Todd (Wrench)

GIMMIES, THE:
Phonic Souls: CD

Full-tilt, trashy ruckus n' roll along the same lines as Thee Machine Gun Elephant or Teengenerate with a smidge of Stones mixed in. Nice cover of Radio Birdman's "New Race." A curt review, I know, but it's damned hard to type when yer rockin' the fugg out. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dionysus)

GLOW, THE:
The Ghosts Are Out: CD

Fairly solid, yet also fairly pedestrian indie rock, heavy on the organ. While not exactly the Replacements in their prime, it does have its merits, especially when they pick up the pace a bit. —Jimmy Alvarado (Bankshot)

GOLDBLADE:
Rebel Songs: CD

This is much, much better than the previous album I heard from these guys, with a more "traditional" approach to the songs, some of which are plenty catchy. The lyrics, while at times a little too cryptic than are good for 'em, address governmental lies, plastic society, and war. Ultimately, though, I just can't seem to get into 'em as much as I would like. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

GORT: The Arrival: CDEP

From one-fourth of El Monte's mid-'90s noise mongers Cascius Clay—specifically their guitarist Frank—comes another blast of aural agony sure to curdle your milk and cause your lawn to die. As with his previous musical endeavors with the Naggs, Spread Ego, and the aforementioned Cascius Clay, sludgy rhythms and liberal doses of noise-for-noise's-sake are slathered on a heaping pile of post-Melvins/Eyehategod heaviness, with maybe a nod in the direction of early Sonic Youth for good measure. While I admit to being an admirer of his previous endeavors, I also freely admit that I think this collaborative effort with drummer Brad Baker is his best, most consistent effort to date. That's a mighty nice Circle One shirt yer wearing in the pic, too, Frank. Tell Mike I'm jealous. —Jimmy Alvarado (gortmusic@hotmail.com)

GRAVES BROTHERS
DELUXE, THE: Light: CD

A cornucopia of sounds emanating from this—Waits-inspired weirdness, a little punk, some (in the words of a Mr. Retodd) "squeaky balloon" free jazz noodling. Interesting listen. —Jimmy Alvarado (Good Forks)

GRAVES BROTHERS
DELUXE, THE: Light: CD

For some weird reason this reminds me of listening to Screamin' Jay Hawkins if he played in a rock project. But sometimes it gets weirder maybe due to a member participating in the Residents. A little too weird for my weird meter. —Donofthedeath (Good Forks)

GRAVY TRAIN!!!!:
Are You Wigglin'?: CD

Oakland's raunch and roll here-ho's,

Gravy Train!!!!, lay down another disc of nasty and naughty party tunes with their second full-length release, *Are You Wigglin'?* Previous efforts gave us pop/rap sing-alongs about bouncing tities, turning people gay and hamburgers that fuck (don't ask). More of the same with *Are You Wigglin'?*, but this half-boy/half-girl foursome toned it down just enough to make this release more fun/less shock. But not so much that you won't be smirking when you're shaking your ass to the sweet sounds of "Pussy Sauce." Providing that you still weren't sold, all this goodness is smothered in bitchin' organs and totally catchy guitar riffs. —Kat Jetson (Kill Rock Stars)

GUAPO: Black Oni: CD

A weird, symphonic installation of five parts (or tracks) that combines the bastardization of free form jazz, noise, and aural textures. It is, in effect, a challenge in patience and tolerance. Over forty minutes of jamming. —Donofthedeath (Ipecac)

GUITAR GANGSTERS:
Let 'Em Have It: CD

As has become expected from these guys, this is poppy UK punk of the first order from a band that fits nicely between Cocksparrer at their most anthemic and the Undertones at their poppiest. The cover of the Four Seasons' "Can't Take My Eyes off of You" was quite good, but the cover of Dennis Brown's "Money in My Pocket" was even better. Few bands mining this territory seem to get it right. This is one of those few. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

GUN SHYS, THE:
Self-titled: CDEP

Sounds like—and kinda looks like—that Code Blue album, minus the one good song. Either that, or any of the really bad songs on that misleadingly awesome-looking *Reds 10* on A&M from 1979. My Fuckhead-O-Meter has been emitting a steady and vociferous blare since initial contact with this item. *Heed it. Heed it!* BEST SONG: "Whisper/Touch," if we're still talking about that Code Blue album BEST SONG TITLE: "Madly in Action" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: This is the kind of band that friends every single person they possibly can on MySpace. —Rev. Nørb (Aeronaut)

GUNPOWDER:
Circle A Ranch: CD

This self-released album is not, as their website claims, "a musical juggernaut of apocalyptic proportions bringing musical ecstasy, chaos, and joy..." I only feel crippling nausea as I recoil in horror. It is neither counterpart of "Dick Dale meets Nick Cave." They even wrote an unfunny comedic ditty about receiving a parking ticket in Los Angeles. They queerly whine, "Well, I'm from Oakland and they wouldn't do that there." Pfffttt. Girl talk. Don't take your guns to town, boys, don't take your guns to town. In fact, lay them down forever and rejoin your hippie friends—keep erroneously thinking, "It's Americans with guns who shoot people dead." —Jessica T (Gunpowder, www.gunpowderband.com)

HAIL SOCIAL: Self-titled: CD

Some nice indie pop with splashes of new wave and post-punk to keep things interesting. Wouldn't be surprised a bit if they became darlings in the underground. —Jimmy Alvarado (Polyvinyl)

HATEBEAK/CANINUS:
Split: 7"

Hatebeak: Grindcore courtesy of two guys, a drum machine, and a parrot vocalist. Yes, a parrot. Sounds exactly like you'd expect. Caninus: Grindcore with vocals comprised of dogs barking and what sounds like someone slurping the last strawful of an unknown drink from the bottom of a very large glass. —Jimmy Alvarado (Reptilian)

HBLOOCK101:
Human Flotsam: CD

From what I gather, this is a collection of EPs from an Australian band that has been around for a while. They serve up some prime-grade punk rock here, with politically oriented lyrics that don't come off as preachy in the least and some catchy, straight-ahead punk riffage. There are a few covers on here, all of which, with the exception of "The Harder They Come," (don't fuck with Jimmy Cliff, boyos) are quite nearly as good as the originals. Most impressive is that they describe themselves as playing "'77-influenced punk rock," yet, even though they cover the Heartbreakers, they sound nothing like the Thunders-worshipping lemmings that glom onto that description like junked-out moths to a flaming kilo of black tar. Definitely worth a listen. —Jimmy Alvarado (Mad Butcher)

HITCHHIKERS, THE:
Self-titled: CD

Mitch Cartwright, former bass slinger for those sorely-missed nudniks The Humpers, has been rumbling on with his Hitchhikers the last four years with a hell of an impressive band that he's now playing bass and singing for. Steve "Spills" Swailes, who you might've seen in the Neurotones, as well as various line-ups of The Gears and The Controllers, is also along for the ride on lead guitar. Musically, it'd be easy to compare the 'Hikers to The Humpers, 'cause the influence is there, but *this* particular group of nudniks are doing just fine. Key jingle-jangles here are "The New Son," "Strychnine," "Life of Crime," and the song that will get your drunken, chain-smoking grandpa up and shaking her ass, "Neckbone Stomp." Catch 'em out at their next gig, if given the chance (and keep your booze away from Spills). —Designated Dale (Hitchhikers, www.thehitchhikers.com)

HOGNOSE: El Sombrero: CD

This started out promising. The first song was kind of a combination of the straight for the throat rock of Nashville Pussy mixed with the pop hook and vocal style of O from Fluf. Interesting for sure, it too bad that everything dissolved into the most boring of stoner rock as soon as the second track started. Too bad indeed. —Ty Stranglehold (Arclight)

HOLOGRAMS, THE: Night of 1000 Ex-Boyfriends: CD

I loved thrash, death metal, grindcore and the like but I do have a soft spot for all-girl bands! So the mighty Retodd put this puppy in my inbox at Razorcake HQ. After so many years, he knows his contributors well. I'm guessing that this is a L.A. based band featuring two Japanese and two Caucasian (one who looks like a young Britney Spears on bass) players. They crank out some great bubblegum pop melodies with a

new wave bent. They also add a snottiness and energy of punk's early years to their songs. Dual vocal duties are handled with dreamy, yet strong, conviction. They lure you in with sweetness and punch you back with a fierce attack. The music has the charm of seeing so many great garage bands that are rarely witnessed by the masses. I hope I have a chance to check them out live someday. —Donofthedeath (Teenacide)

HOMBRINUS DUDES/
Loaded For Bear: Split: 7"

I'm really not a fan of that crazy, wall o' death growly (grind? crust? who cares?) stuff, so I guess this might be a short review. My first tip off is the Hombrinus Dudes' logo. It's all barbed and all over the place and you can't really read it. I find that in most of my experience, bands with logos like that play tunes that I don't like. Yep, I was right. Loaded for Bear were already ahead in my books since I could read who they were. They also had funnier song titles ("The Jack Lord Fan Club" and "Machine Powered Orgasms"). They had more song structure and less growl, but at the end of the day, I'm still not a fan. —Ty Stranglehold (no address)

HORDE, THE: Join or Die: CD

The recent couple of years of hardcore have raised the waterline. The landscape's been reshaped, expanded, and redefined, like a river backed up by a dam. Bands like Fucked Up, Career Suicide, Out Cold, Cut the Shit, DS-13, Tragedy, From Ashes Rise, and La Faction, I believe, have dealt out hands that equal the best from the early '80s. The Horde are good, not great. Take early Sick of It All, a less frenetic Force, and, especially, Death By Stereo's first record, and they're in that camp. Borderline metallic, tough guy/positive force hardcore that's not shameful, not without merit, but not entirely memorable or distinct in its own right. —Todd (1-2-3-4 Go!)

HUMAN EYE, THE:
Self-titled: CD

I don't even fucking know what this is. At least one Clone Defect is in this band, and it sort of sounds like there's a backbone made up of that really art-damaged garage stuff that's been making the rounds (Clone Defects, Lost Sounds, Functional Blackouts), but it's so completely off the deep end that I don't even know what to say. And I grew up with stuff like the Butthole Surfers and the Cows, so for me to be this stunned by noise is really saying something. At times, like "Age," they do some cool shit, but for the most part, this doesn't have enough hooks to appeal to most people and it doesn't have enough parts where somebody yells out, "cunt cunt cunt cunt," to appeal to a Butthole Surfers fan. Probably a great record to put on and clear out a crowded room, though. —Josh (In the Red)

HUMAN TANGA:
A Ritual Sacrifice for the Big Nothing: CD

What the hell is this? The CD cover is a horrid cut and paste job that looks like an Urban Outfitters ad. The music is mid-tempo, heavy rock with lousy drum production and these irritating low-pitched, goofy vocals that seriously sound like the dude from Gwar. I don't understand why anyone in the world would like this. Even the band sounds bored. —Ben Snakepit (Nicotine)

INDIAN JEWELRY: *In Love with Loving: 7"*

Using the second Echoboy album on Mute as my main frame of reference (and who wouldn't?), the title track sounds like one of the few real bombs off that album, and "Climbing up the Walls," while better, would probably only qualify as filler material on that record—but "Lost My Sight," which occupies the entire b-side of this slowly turning platter, sounds like one of the better songs thereon—trancey, echoey, fuzzy, repetitive, f'd up, and cool. I imagine i'd be courting a lynching to suggest purchasing a record of this nature; having not been lynched in a while, i suppose i'll consider it. **BEST SONG:** "Lost My Sight" **BEST SONG TITLE** "Climbing up the Walls" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** "These tracks were recorded as quickly as possible." —Rev. Nørb (On/On Switch)

INTERFUSE: *Closed Doors Open Tracks: CD*

Based on the first track, I was going to write this one off as another emo release that sounds like At the Drive-In. That was until I heard track two, entitled "Jeff Truth" with its pounding bass riffs accented by the right mix of feedback and distortion and drums that feel almost tribal mixed with the right tones to give it a driving effect. That song has a unique quality to it that it was kind of hard to pin down. At the moment, it sounds like a mixture of Crass meets the Super Heroines or Elastica. But other tracks veer more towards rock, and punk—and one track I swear sounded like it could have been an X track with its hints of cow punk. The opening track almost made this a

throwaway, but with further inspection, this became a keeper. —Donofthedeald (Tragic End)

JAPAN'THER: *Wolfenswan: CD*

Though Japan'ther's anarchic crush of samples, lo-fi synth buzz, beats, cheap beats, and poppy melodies doesn't really physically resemble Pavement, it does remind me of that band's similar methodology fifteen years back or whatever it was. Throwing shit together because it was fun and because it was what just came out always made a tremendous amount of sense to me, and even in the apparent disorder a certain homogeneity gels when the work is taken as a whole. And so, even if this is something I never would have sought out, its lack of pretension generates a puddle of comfort into which I'm happy to settle. —Cuss Baxter (Plan-It-X)

JFK JR. ROYAL AIR-FORCE: *Androids: CD*

Sludgy, sometimes almost jazzy art damage, sorta like Flipper without all the lyrics or Savage Republic at their noisiest and least Middle Eastern. If you're in just the right mood, this more than delivers the goods. Factoid that'll probably never come up in a Trivial Pursuit game: this band features Billy Syndrome, who was in the Pricks with a pre-Def Jam Rick Rubin. —Jimmy Alvarado (Slutfish, no address)

JIYUNA: *The Devil Is Waiting for Us in the Palace—Rush Courageously: CD*

Boy, the packaging on this is beautiful: screenprinted on chipboard and hand-cut in the shape of a cityscape, folded

in thirds with a little button for the CD to sit on, and with a tiny twenty-page lyric book inserted. However, due to the fact that the actual music on the CD is weak screamy me-core, I do believe I will cause the CD to not be at my house and instead install another one on its top-flight little button. I just hope I don't forget what I did and start recommending Jiyuna to my friends in a couple years, or—heavens!—accidentally go see them myself. Ah fuck, a couple more years at this pace and I won't even like music anymore. —Cuss Baxter (ibf)

JOHN FRANCIS & IMPOSTERS, THE: *The Earnest Manboy Suite in E Major: CDEP*

I cannot recommend this "opus": pretentious typewriter solos bookend and infiltrate one-dimensional two-man three-practice guitar rock which I suppose gains "opus" status by virtue of: 1) being a fifteen-minute song with: 2) a recurrent theme (i.e. one riff). I wish I knew enough music theory to dispute its E Major status, but I'll leave that to the Commissioner. And, oh yeah, don't get mad at anyone named John Francis; this guy's name is Jack Francis. —Cuss Baxter (John Francis, etc)

JOHN PODDY: *Punk Rock Star: CD*

An apparent one-man band singing songs like "You Made Me Gay" and "Your Mom's a Fag." Punka dunka, dude. —Jimmy Alvarado (Long Bored)

JUDGE: *What It Meant, the Complete Discography: CD*

Funny, but after all these, years I still can't help but think of Crucial Youth's

parodying of the whole "hardline" straight edge thing when I put this on, and I soon find myself singing "I've got a positive dental outlook" and "if you don't shave clean, you're not in the scene" at the top of my lungs, which is, of course, not what's coming out of the speakers. Judge was one of those late '80s straight edge bands that just seemed to be flogging a plenty dead horse by the time they came along, and nearly two decades later, they sound just about as stale, with all their big, gruff talk about their crew and looking down on people for doing drugs, and yet apparently seeing no irony in embedding more than a little metal riffage into their sound and even covering Led Zeppelin. It's not that I had/have anything against straight edge as a philosophy, but its more puritanical adherents, with their virulent self-righteousness and fashion sense inspired by Catholic school jocks, hold a special place in my heart, right next to dung-beetles, the Bush family, moco sculptures and born-again Christians. Subsequently, any band that aligns themselves with any group of Neanderthals who think that beating someone up will keep them from getting high is not gonna rate very high around these parts, as some of us are of the belief that such attitudes and actions run contrary to the whole punk ethic. Anyway, if you're into this late period "youth crew" tripe you'll be happy to know you can now play their entire recorded output while you're getting ready for the evening's brain-washing session at the local Krishna temple without having to stop once to change the record. —Jimmy Alvarado (Revelation)

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This dude wants to be Johnny Thunders so fucking bad, I can smell the hairspray from here. This album sounds like our takes from Thunders' *Que Sera, Sera* LP, which wasn't really that good of a record to begin with. Between the four-page booklet, the back cover and the CD itself, there are thirteen photos of the band. I don't want to bag too hard on this, as they seem to be, you know, fairly sincere in that Jeff-Dahl-rock-meets-punk kind of way, and apparently this guy's been around forever, but there's only so many times you can rhyme "all right" and "tonight" before I put another record on. —Keith Rosson (Kevin K)

Kill the Man Who Questions was a political hardcore band from the mid-to-late '90s and this is a collection of their singles and compilation tracks. They're a band whose name I used to see around but never got around to picking up any of their stuff besides the *Sugar Industry* LP, and listening to this CD, I feel like a dumbass for not doing so. As with most DIY (as in, "not on Victory Records") hardcore from that era, and pretty much from the whole decade, it's raw, dirty, and doesn't make the slightest effort to be listener-friendly or commercially viable. It takes its share of cues from bands like Born Against, Crass, and Logical Nonsense, and the result is intense and explosive, fitting in well next to contemporaries (in aesthetic, not necessarily sound) like His Hero Is Gone and Los Crudos. It's a rad way to pick up any of their stuff if you missed out like I did the first time around. —Josh (Cheap Art)

I somewhat enjoy the Kill-A-Watts' passable Infections impersonations. BEST BACK COVER PHOTO WHICH ILLUSTRATES A SONG TITLE: "Zipper Patience" BEST SONG TITLE: "Oh Cheeseburger" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The font that "KILL-A-WATTS" is typeset in on the front cover is called "Lower West Side." It should not be confused with Lower East Side, which just looks like a bunch of wood. -Rev. Nørb (Rip Off)

No matter how you dress it, package it, slice it, or dice it, metal bites the weenie.
—Jimmy Alvarado (Kineto)

ered me, and the postured, blood-soaked overindulgence on the cover kept this at arm's length. Straight from my now hometown, these Detroiters bang out fifteen tracks of fast, loud, and fucked psychobilly. Detroit's caliginosityensorcells their collective maddened mind, spewing forth fertile, bona fide rock with deference to the Damned and early Misfits. Passes muster with the old school crowd—one of the better things I've heard in this vein for quite some time. —Jessica T (PsychobillyUS)

Did I just stick my finger in an outlet or do these fucking guys rip?!? I'll answer

that for you. This CD is frying my brain! The Krunchies have the energy of a caffeinated and sugared up five-month-old puppy that just took a hit of cocaine. There are twelve songs on this CD in just over nineteen minutes of sheer rock! Tinny guitar riffs and sloppy bass lines layered nicely over flowing hard and fast paced, almost hardcore, beats. Male/female fronted vocals that sing and scream over the top of the musical insanity. In fact, Amanda's high-pitched screaming could break some glass. Not only do they musically amaze me, but they have song titles like "Reaffirming my Hatred of Humanity through Failed Relationships" and "Kill Your Face/Murder My Will." It's hard to make comparisons and make it sound accurate, because even though the genre sounds similar, I can't place a band that has a similar sloppy fast garage/no wave sound that can pull off the amount of energy these guys have. This just may be one of my new favorites. Now they just have to tour out west so I can see them. -Newtwin (Criminal IQ)

Music created by human Happy Meal prizes! Querents who wish to know what it is that separates Elfin Masters of Treacle-Core such as the KFM from mere wishful thinkers should look no further than "Chapel Hill, Surf City". J. Cahill could have easily just let the lyrics contain the comparatively vanilla line "*The California coastline is really the most,*" but, instead, he spent the extra three seconds to think about it a little bit and presented it in the subtly-but-powerfully altered form of "*The California coastline is really the **most-line***" transmuting mere Vanilla to mighty Chocolate Chip Mint with one deftly placed syllable! Please make a note of it. In a perfect world, James Cahill would be playing Dr. Doom in the upcoming *Fantastic Four* movie, and the Stormtroopers in *Star Wars* would wear sweater vests. BEST SONG: "Chapel Hill, Surf City" BEST SONG TITLE: "Candy Shoppe (Twice)," if only for the esoteric Modern Lovers reference FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: 1. This record contains the Swimmingly Records Slip of Quality: "*If it weren't quality, we wouldn't put it out, and we wouldn't put this little slip of paper in it either. That's a promise.*" 2. The Kung Fu Monkeys once bought me lunch. You're goddamn right there was a milkshake involved! —Rev. Nørb (Swimmingly)

Having been born in the early 1970s, it's tough for me to hearken back to the beach blanket bingo days of the 1950s, or the psychedelic garage pop experience of the 1960s. I don't know when the Kung Fu Monkeys were born, but they've created a 7" that takes you back directly to these bygone eras, and more. "American Beach Party USA (We're Having Christmas for Breakfast)" is sugary, not saccharine, bubblegum pop with a Beatnik Termites vibe that makes you wanna bleach your hair, grab a surf board, and show off for the babes sunning themselves in bikinis. "I Dig the Way That You Move" would fit nicely on a Zombies record or *Nuggets* compi-

lation. The flip side has tinges of Beat Happening minimalism on the first song, finishing off with "Summertime in the Desert," which I'm thinking inspired one Todd Taylor to send this to me for review (that and the fact that one of the guys in the band is, in a remarkable coincidence, called Reno!). "Summertime..." is that tune you wanna hear once the sun has set, the stars are out, and your best girl is snuggled up beside you. You never want the moment, or song, to end. This is a perfect piece of underground pop. Highly recommended. —Josh Benke, Cultural Ambassador (Whoa Oh)

Folk music has not been this good in a long time; Langhorne Slim's debut full-length is filled with finger-pickin' bluegrass goodness with a dash of rock-'n'roll added to the fairytale. His voice resembles Tiny Tim's mixed with the raspy blues vocals of the past, while the guitar and banjo playing flows beautifully throughout the record. He sings about love past and present, misunderstandings, awkwardness, and other emotional attributes that any one person can be empathic toward. You wouldn't think a twenty-two-year-old man such as himself could do it all so well, but he can and does. There have been a ton of retro-minded artists coming along these last few years, but I have not heard any of them (with the exception of The Starvations) do justice to the past up until I heard this album. Listen to "In the Midnight" or "Hope and Fulfillment" and you will understand why. Grab your best gal and get ready to shoot your eyes out; this is grade A material. —Mor (Narnack)

Love songs to girlfriends past and present abound, as do odes to former bandmates and long lost cars, all of which are dished up in steaming turd-piles of pop punk and ska. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hellcat)

Decent enough mid-'80s sounding hard-core—not too fast, not too slow, nary any metal to harsh the buzz. Sometimes reminds me of mid-period Poison Idea without the intensity. —Jimmy Alvarado (Day 51)

[illegible]

YEAH!]—i mean, it's cute and cool and all, but give it a f'n break here and there, willya?); **2)** Cripes, write a bridge once in a while; and **3)** i guess i have no other complaints, other than the overall feeling that i went somewhere for a burger and came home with a kids' meal. Chicken fingers are good food, though! **BEST SONG:** "Something to Do," i guess, since i took all that time slander-ing it **BEST SONG TITLE:** "She's Been Around" (band is not much for the dying craft of song titlery it appears) **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** I can't look at the disc graphic without thinking of the cover of the first Every Mother's Son album. —Rev. Nørb (Rip Off)

Having read the previous line, you already know if you are inclined to buy this or not or have any interest in it. If you appreciate spazzy, grindy noise with lots of screaming, I recommend this, although this EP—while still The Locust—seems to be missing something (“Hey wait, dude—it’s the fucking *Locust*. They make Napalm Death sound like Codeine on ‘ludes, man... *how can you even tell the fucking difference?*” “Well, that’s a fair question. I think most music critics would be hard-pressed to identify how, in a case like this, they distinguish between a quality record and one which doesn’t match up. Frankly—and I realize that this is normal for The Locust—there’s just too much keyboard on this disc which sounds like someone who just shit their pants squeezing their thighs and ass cheeks together to smear the feces around. Other records in the genre don’t have as much of that blip-and-twitter, wow-and-flutter synth-grind twaddle. Clear enough?”). —Puckett (Ipecac)

There's that old joke: Which came first, Combat Wounded Veteran or the Locust? CWV's *Duck Down for the Torso 12"* sounded like the Locust if the Locust wanted to get in, get out, and quit fucking around. Anyway, you know what you're getting here—spastic, crazed, and intrinsically fucked up. It looks like there are seven songs on here lyrically, and four or six depending on how you decipher the back cover track listing, but the CD itself only lists two tracks. So maybe the Locust is, like, working in *movements* now. Which is possible: this sounds like an orchestra for a madhouse. Think Ruins or other John Zorn projects, or maybe a little Melt Banana, couple it with nearly nonsensical, occasionally biting lyrics and you've got *Safety Second, Body Last*. It's only ten minutes long but by the end of it I want to pull my own fingers off. So there's that, at least. —Keith Rosson (Ipecac)

This long-defunct (as in 1983 kinda defunct) Tulsa band kinda reminds me of the Diodes, and i'm having trouble figuring out if that's because of legit musical similarities or because the Diodes had that song "Death in the Suburbs" or what. Probably a little bit o' both. Anyway, it always makes me a little happy, in here (thumps ribcage) (coughs up blood), to see bands from Way Back When get something resembling an album out, even if it is twenty-plus years late. I mean, fuck, they deserve it, and i don't think a lot of people these days realize what an impossi-

ble dream it seemed like Way Back When to get an album out. **ALL HAIL YOUR UNDERDOCUMENTED EFFORTS, O BAND!** That said, i could pretty much take or leave Los Reactors musically—they sound like the basic Central Time Zone punk/rock/wave of the late '70s/early '80s (i'm really not so sure the perpetually whistling keyboards aren't just in the way most of the time, and the topical subject matter [John Wayne Gacy, Patty Hearst, the Shah of Iran] that i'm sure seemed timeless and edgy and brilliant and irreverent at the time now comes off as some sort of mere cultural identifier, like something from *That '70s Show* or something), and, with all due respect for their efforts (efforts which we still reap the benefits of today, i might add), when hardcore came along, although it didn't exactly kick this type of band to the curb, *per se*, it did show it to its seat... which it took, pretty much never to be heard from again. It's unfortunate that the origins of the various recordings are so poorly documented here, i woulda liked to have known when they wrote and recorded the neo-thrasher "I Don't Wanna Be Like You," just so's i could tell if it was like them reading the "hardcore rules!" handwriting on the wall or what... I'd also like to have had the liner notes written by a member of N.O.T.A. or something, just to put things into historical perspective for me... it certainly couldn't be any worse than the existing blather (i mean, the liner note guy calls Los Reactors one of Tulsa's "most prolific" bands in the same paragraph he states that the band only released two 45s during the four years of their existence). *Chee!* (of course, if the guy who wrote the liner notes actually was in N.O.T.A. unbe-

knownst to me, i apologize to the planet) **BEST SONG:** "You Move Me" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Dying Persian Monarch" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** The video doesn't play in my computer OR my DVD player... but, since it's Track 01 on the disc, if you put it in a CD player and wait a while, it will play **THEE LOUDEST PROLONGED BLAST OF STATIC** you have ever heard in your life. *I gay-ron-tee!* —Rev. Nørb (Rip Off)

LOW POINT DRAINS:
Self-titled: 7"

Lo-fi trash rock courtesy of a two-man band. I know that in a post-White Stripes world such things are a dime a dozen anymore, but these guys actually manage to pull off some pretty good tunes. Nice stick figure portrait on the cover, too. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kuriosa)

LUNGFISH: Feral Hymns: CD
Every so often, when the mood strikes, I'll put on an older Lungfish record. Daniel Higgs writes amazingly poetic lyrics, which, in many cases, is a bad thing, but Higgs is a really great lyricist. And I love the fact that not only is this band completely lacking in commercial appeal, but they've been around for something like fifteen years and they're *ridiculously* obscure. But musically, this doesn't really do anything for me. Unlike their Dischord peers such as Fugazi or Jawbox, who, arty or not, made music that was dynamic and interesting, *Feral Hymns* finds a slow, drowsy groove and stays there, and ultimately there's nothing feral about it. —Josh (Dischord)

MAD COWBOYS: A Fistful of Dirty Dollars: CD

Have you ever wondered what it would sound like if the Marked Men wrote and played songs like Propagandhi? If so, then this is the disc for you. This is very politically charged music with an almost lo-fi production value and guitar sound. The vocalist sounded so much like a Marked Man that I had to double check... Yep, these guys are Canadians. I enjoyed this quite a bit. —Ty Stranglehold (Mad Cowboys)

MARVEL:
Five Smell City: CD

Not a bad approximation of that '70s sound via the KISS school of glam. Liked it more than I expected to or probably should. —Jimmy Alvarado (Black Juj)

MARY TIMONY: Ex Hex: CD
I loved Mary Timony when she fronted the storybook fantasyland that was Helium. In the indie-lovin' '90s, she was the cool and mysterious dark horse that sang fantastically odd songs about superballs, vampires, and medieval people. But, just when things were getting good, Helium disbanded. Timony soon ventured into the obligatory solo career and I stayed behind, content with my perfect little Helium catalogue. But with the release of *Ex Hex*, Timony's back in fine form. Angular guitars surf around in that space between your ears and dreamy vocals whisper you the sweetest rock lullabye. Oh yeah, and there's a song about pirates! —Kat Jetson (Lookout!)

METEORS:
These Evil Things: CD

I dunno if I've outgrown 'em, if they've lost their sheen, or if I'm just not in the mood, but these guys just ain't movin' me like they used to. The

songs are all right as far as psychobilly goes, but they seem to be variants on the same theme and lacking in oomph. Found myself drawn more to the three instrumentals than the tracks with vocals. —Jimmy Alvarado (Headhunter)

MEXICAN BLACKBIRDS/PINK SWORDS: Black Vinyl Revenge, Chapter 1: Split LP

The title line here sounds like some sketchy urban legend from a fictional city across the border made into a '50s so-bad-you-love-it exploitation flick. This record is also that cool. It combines previous CD releases: *The Birds' Just to Spite You* (2003, Dirtnap) with *The Swords' One Night High* (2003, Mortville). The music fetish factor gets even higher: both have amazing girl drummers from other great bands (Jill from Valentine Killers, Suzy Motard), half-black and half-pink vinyl, and one new live track from each band. Catchy, hard-driving rock. Entire albums on each side, except the Birds' "Burn It Down/Over the Edge" track from the CD is *not* here. Alas, still an awesome record. —Speedway Randy (Rockin' Bones)

MEXICAN BLACKBIRDS: Fear of Texas: 12" EP

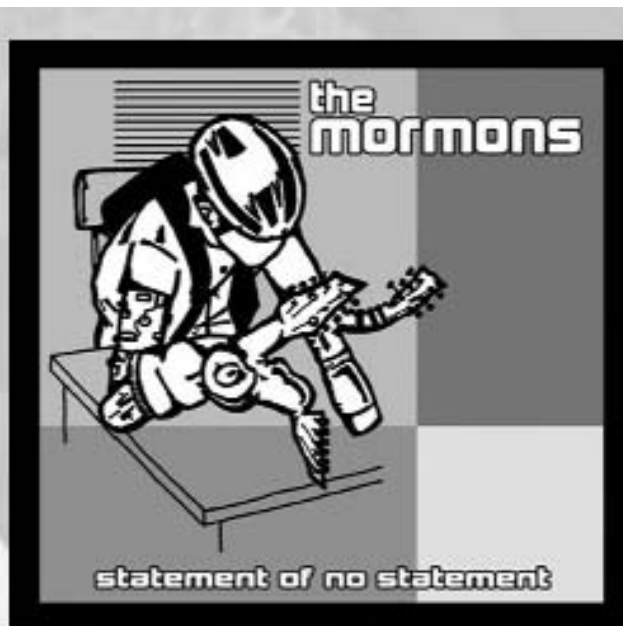
Smear on some Motards grease and resin, huff some gas with early Zeke, add the smell of burning hair, squeeze and screw in the punk'n'roll pyrotechnic sensibility of The B-Movie Rats, and you've got a close approximation of the Mexican Blackbirds. It's in the red, the vocalist sounds just short of being strangled, and it feels like their instruments are stabbing you in the chest while slicing your tendons so



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there's no easy retreat. They've definitely learned assault tactics of their own and aren't just pickpocketing the bands previously mentioned. Good stuff. It's growing on me with each listen. —Todd (Mortville)

**MICO DE NOCHE:
Balls Deep: CD**

Nice'n'sludgy rock/punk stuff here: very noisy with flamenco flourishes here and there. Wasn't expecting much, so it was a pleasant surprise that it wasn't half bad. —Jimmy Alvarado (Violent Hippie)

**MILLION DOLLAR
MARXISTS: Stop: 7"**

The cover, for whatever reason, led me to believe that I'd be stumbling into some lame ass sludge rock; an old grunge cassage being eaten by a tape deck, some Atomic 61 test-pressing 45 being played at 33, you get the idea. Slow. Drrrooooooning. Bass-heavy. Let me just say, I was surprised when I put it on and smoke started shooting out of my speakers. What we've got here is some burner-hot garage rock a la—I don't know—the Chinese Millionaires or the Screaming Bloody Marys. The fact that there are only two songs on this: lame. The two songs themselves: pretty goddamn ripping. A bit of fresh blood here in a genre that at times seems to be sagging and stumbling its way out of the bar. Thanks, guys. —Keith Rosson (Blue Bus)

**MIRRORS, THE:
A Green Dream: CD**

Some pretty good psych rock here, true to form, and with a solid '60s feel to it. Probably not something you might wanna put on while you mowing the

lawn or anything, but good listening nonetheless. —Jimmy Alvarado (Birdman)

MOIST HOST: Self-titled: CD

Well, I guess these guys could be pigeonholed as "hardcore," but the tunes are wildly disjointed and the lyrics are, to put it politely, fucking weird, man. How weird? To wit: "AIDS killing apes campus style rape eating Gilbert Grape a celibate retard man celebrates the century attracting wildabeast [sic] licking zebra butt creatures on the run hipsters having fun breaking through a patch raping bestial ass save the best for last Obi-Wan Kenobi leader of Nairobi has large genitals open up you stupid bich [sic]." Try singing THAT at your next church social. —Jimmy Alvarado (Butter Flavored)

MOJOMATICS: A Sweet

Mama Gonna Hoodoo Me: CD
Good, catchy '60s-type tight mod rock from this merry duo of Italians dressed in properly creased monochromatic suits with flashy ties and *Quadrophenia* hair. MojoMatt and DaveMatic bang their way through sixteen ass-shakin' swampy punky rootsy bluesy hollerin' tracks. Their imitation and interpretation of American music raises the bar for all Europeans influenced by American music. And their English is impeccable —Jessica T (Alien Snatch)

**MR. PLOW:
Mad Plow Disease: CD**

Do you like GG Allin? How about Raffi? Have you ever heard what the two would sound like if mixed together? Enter Mr. Plow! Acoustic punk rock dirtiness that will have you crying with

laughter at every turn. Why try and describe it when I can let the song titles speak for themselves. "Crackhead Momma," "Are You Really a Guy?", and "Morning Boner" are obviously love songs while "Officer BJ," "Bitch Slap Me Face," and "Meat Truck Carnival" are just songs about life in East Vancouver. Oh, and bonus points for taking Joey Shithead up on his dare to write a song about him ("DOA"). The best in feel good, scuz-rock acoustichaos! —Ty Stranglehold (Crusty)

**MUMMIES OF THE
INSANE: Self-titled: CD**

I'll bet you these guys smoke a SHITLOAD of marijuana. I wish I was into smokin' weed—it mighta made listening to this a little less tedious, though it is good for a few laughs. "Civilized Existence" boasts the line "Sit upright, you damn dirty ape!" and "Parasite" sounds like the music to a video game on the technologically cutting-edge Atari 2600. "Fuck Your Mummy," despite the great title, is little more than R2D2 noises and a rhythm section too fucked up to play together. Lots of needless instrumental farting around, taking their cues from Sebadoh's *Freed Weed* but without any of the redeeming indie qualities of that record. Avoid this stinker. —Josh Benke, Cultural Ambassador (Slutfish)

**MURDER YOUR DARLINGS:
Self-titled: CD**

Loud, brash rock'n'roll that would give some o' them Scandinavian rocker types a run for their money. —Jimmy Alvarado (Reptilian)

MUTINY: Rum Rebellion: CD
The Irish sounds of the Pogues or Flogging Molly has now gone international. Out of Australia comes the pirate sounds of Mutiny. A combination of three women and two men, this band bangs out a mighty good time with their brand of Celtic punk. Vocal duties are handled by two of the women and the gent on drums, which is good to keep things fresh in a sound that can get overdone quickly. They expel a spirit of fun that makes me want to go to the refrigerator right now and crack open a cold one. Relying more on acoustic instruments gives the band a traditional feel and adds to the rawness of the recording. I wonder how hard it is to learn how to play a tin whistle. —Donofthedeath (Fistolo)

**NARRATOR, THE:
Such Triumph: CD**

Seeing as 1) those responsible appear to be male; 2) there are drawings of kitties, doggies, and flowers on the cover, I think it's patently clear what kind of music can be expected from this. Gonna hafta be extra diligent in cleaning my ears with a wire brush after listening to this. —Jimmy Alvarado (Flameshovel)

**NEED NEW BODY:
Where's Black Ben?: CD**

Funky white boy rap, sound bits, and improvisational noise jams abound, but it still wasn't all that interesting. —Jimmy Alvarado (5RC)

**NEGATIVLAND:
No Business: CD**
Negativland, if you don't know, are a group of audio-collagists who have, for

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something like twenty-five years, assembled found sounds (from radio, old records, etc.) into their "compositions," and gotten sued at least once along the way for copyright infringement or something to that effect. Negativland, if you DO know... well, you probably know more than I do, because they never did a whole lot for me other than the Weatherman's spoken stuff whose voice I could listen to all dang day, even the longest day of the year. Due to their legal troubles, they've become champions of the idea that culture's products should be available for later cultural workers (read: "artists" of various sorts) to use as building blocks. In other words (among other things), that sampling (specifically in music, as analogous processes in other disciplines are generally fair game and unregulated in the way music is) should not be a crime. *No Business*, as progression of that philosophy, is the first Negativland work to be COMPLETELY composed of components from other sources; nothing original to Negativland is on here. And it's funny as hell. Ethel Merman blasting (I think that's the word for sounds coming out of Ethel Merman) "There's no business like stealing," and Julie Andrews' favorite things folded asunder ("crisp eyelashes," "brown raindrops") are highlights, but there's a dense wall of this stuff for you to lean against. Also, there's a fifty-page book (not to mention a special whoopee cushion) which explains very clearly Negativland's position on copyright, the potential benefits and pitfalls of the internet regarding music distribution and intellectual property rights, and even what's wrong with America's corporate law that drives greed and bullshit from the top down. *No Business* may

not be the best introduction to Negativland for the uninitiated (then again, I may; I'm no expert), but as a package, it's going to be a worthy addition to any free-thinking person's pile of stuff. —Cuss Baxter (Seeland)

NERVOUS PATTERNS: Beautiful Brutal, You Can't Change: one-sided 7"

The Nervous Patterns inhibit that tightly wound, anxious universe of the Lost Sounds (along with sharing members), where circuit boards in your brain rust and the sound of something big and strong breaking in wrong ways, leaking a mysterious fluid permeates the first song. Makes me think of androids made of meat, in revolt, working on Kraftwerk songs with their fists. The second song, "You Can't Change" is what I wish they'd played at my prom instead of the theme song to "St. Elmo's Fire." It's swelling, aching, tender, bats about bright Cure-like guitars, and twines them around mournful but hopeful female vocals. The second side is blank; needle just zipped right across it. —Todd (Zaxxon Virile Action)

NIKMAT OLALIM: Self-Devouring Land: 7" EP

Israeli hardcore with lyrics condemning the Israeli government, conscription, shitty jobs, and blindly following ideologies. The inside of the cover also includes two essays, one about how the concept of anti-Semitism is abused by Israeli hardliners and the government to justify its actions, and another entitled "Did You Ever Think What It's Like to Shoot Somebody in the Head?" No doubt this release is sure to cause quite a stir in the band's home country. Much respect to them for having the balls to be

a political punk band in a place where having a point of view that doesn't follow the party line could render a person very dead. —Jimmy Alvarado (Boshet)

NOFX: There's No Fun in Fundamentalism b/w Fungus, I'm a Huge Fan of Bad Religion: 7"

I'll admit it right off the bat that I'm prejudiced. I don't like rich people. Pretty much hate 'em. Class war. There's a line you do not cross. That type of thing. Fat Mike's probably the only millionaire I actually admire. Because he could take the easy route out. By some lucky horseshoe, NOFX has had the suburbs in the palm of their hands for over a decade. And instead of just going out and peddling some shoes at the Warped Tour, he makes it plain and simple (and funny, and catchy) on the A-side that dogmatism in religion is unequivocally fucked. (Priests molesting children and how many Middle Eastern religions treat women are two easy examples.) And if that shakes some kid up—who's stuck in the stucco nightmare inside the bowels of a planned community to a new way of looking—awesome. The b-side's a throwaway. Khaki-colored vinyl. —Todd (Fat)

NORTH LINCOLN: Truth Is a Menace: CD

I'm sure these guys are so sick of hearing this by now (or entirely proud), but memories of hearing the first few Hot Water Music records come to mind right away. The driving, medium-tempo anthems do well as a follow up to a genre that ended before it began. I can picture a basement full of kids, fist pumping through every chorus. Even

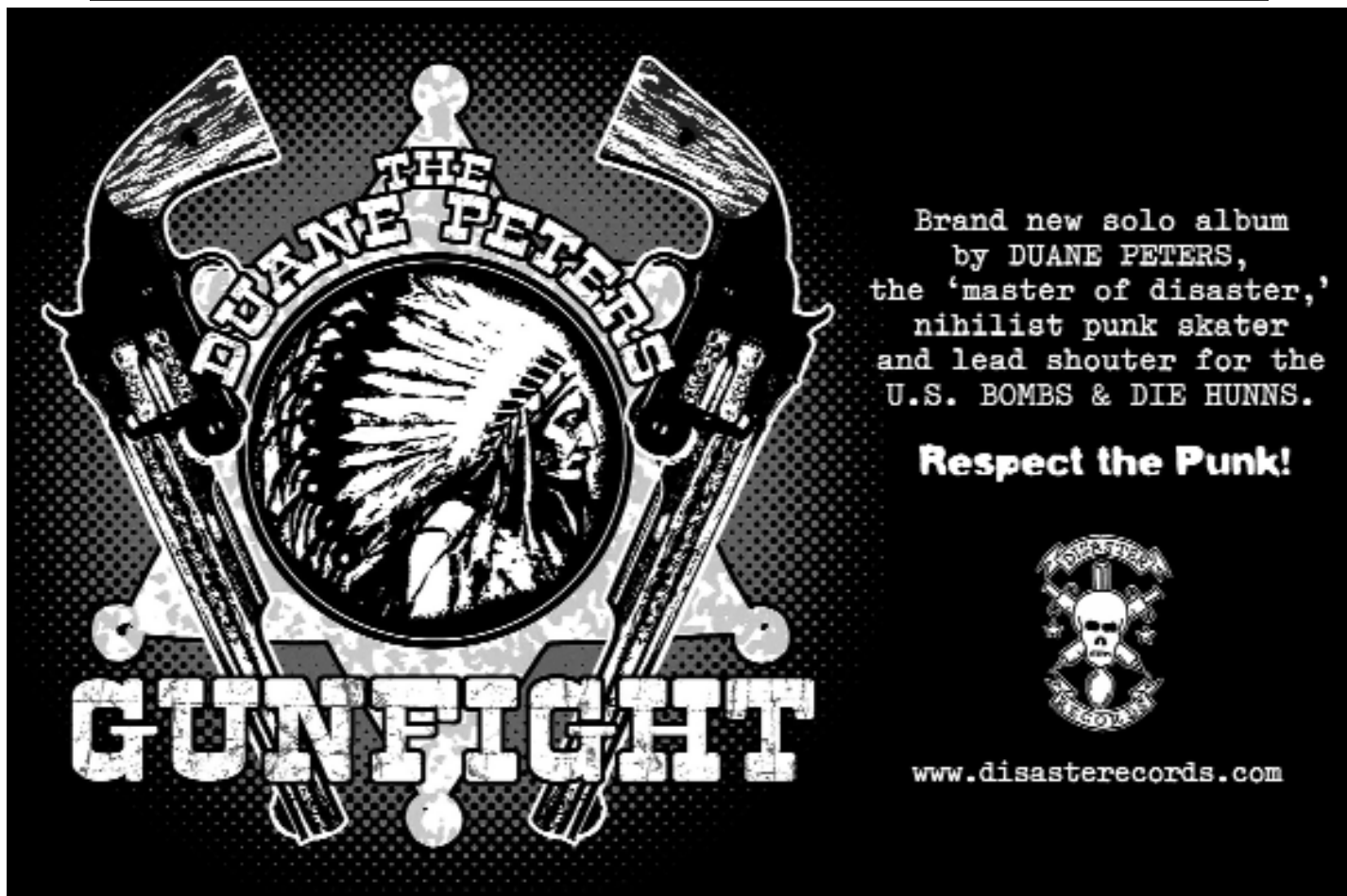
though I made a heavy comparison to a band that has left its roots far behind, North Lincoln still has a style that is their own. I've been listening to these guys for a few years via many review packages, and they continue to grow and better themselves. This is their strongest release and fans of the band or the genre should not be disappointed. —Newtim (No Idea)

NRA: Machine: CD

These seniors of the Amsterdam scene are back with a new record and distro through Gearhead in the USA. The music is great pop punk that carries the same feelings of later Ramones records and even reminds me at times of J Church with a touch of rock'n'roll. The choruses are all catchy. It's one of those records that, at first listen, it just blends into punk homogeny, but after a few listens it really digs into your brain and, days later, some song will be playing in your head that you just can't place. The tune you can't get out of your head sounds like a bunch of bands, and you really dig the song, but you just can't figure out what the hell it is. Then when you finally remember listening to this record it dawns on you that these guys are really good. —Newtim (Gearhead)


OPERATION CLIFF CLAVIN: Out of Control (A Discography of the '90s): CD

I just can't believe how often the Operation Cliff Clavin CDs go out of print and then warrant a repress. Now that's a cult following! This time around, there are even MORE songs than before and a nifty li'l live DVD. I'm glad to have gotten this though, otherwise I never would have heard the anti-*Star Wars* song, called "C3PO Can



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Suck My Ass," and the two amazing covers: one of the Misfits song "Astrozombies" and the other of the oldies hit "Blue Moon." —Mr. Z (Plan-it-X)

OPPRESSED, THE:
Won't Say Sorry: 2 x CD

Long-running skinhead band that has been a favorite, compile some covers that run the gamut on this release. They pay homage to Jamaican legends Simaryp, the 4 Skins, the Clash, Eddie and the Hot Rods, Sham 69, Cockney Rejects, Slade, and others who came before them. I can't believe how many covers this band has recorded. Makes me want to break out the hair clippers and shave the head, followed by cleaning things up with a razor and dusting off the fourteen-hole Doc Martins, grabbing a wife beater out of the dresser, pulling out the suspenders out of the box of clothes I haven't worn in a couple of decades, and trying to squeeze into a tight pair of pegged jeans. There are so many classics covered with competency. Worthy of the price of purchase are the two versions of the oi classic, "Skinhead Girl." —Donofthedeat (Insurgence)

ORPHANS, THE:
Electric S b/w W.W.W.D.: 7"

Live, the Orphans dominate. Wade, the bass player, is unplugged half the time, busy on conking someone over the head with his stand and swinging his bass like a bat on a rope. Jenny can't stand still, and is often cleaning the floor with her back as she slithers around, the arc of her prowling defined by the length of her mic cord. Brandon's an absolute basher. Dann doesn't move too much, but it's really a mind trick because he

gets so much sound out of what's he's playing, like he's got a secret third hand that no one else can see. Live: awesome. On record: on par awesomeness. What's sometimes not obvious live (via okay PA and the limitations of DIY) is that how layered their songs really are. Smart, hardcore leads are snuggled up to blunt garage. Tricky little bridges and intros tie them altogether, so there's both considerable weight to the obvious "fuck-you-ity" and nimble movement to keep it far and away from being generic. Say, for purely hypothetical reasons, The Orphans came out in L.A. in '77. They'd be neck and neck with The Bags, The Screamers, and The Weirdos. Being that it's 2005 and L.A.'s fractured all to hell, punk's getting dirty and neglected again, and not as many people are paying attention, do yourself a favor and pick up one of the finest 7"s this year will likely see and people will be seeking out for years to come. —Todd (Vinyl Dog)

ORPHANS, THE:
Electric S b/w W.W.W.D.: 7"

Remember the time you drank so much cough syrup at that Oblivians show that you puked up cigarette butts onto the hood of somebody's car and then you woke up the next morning on a pile of trash with a black eye and somebody else's pants on? This is like two songs of that. —Josh (Vinyl Dog)

PARTISANS, THE:
Self-titled: CD

Here's another band I knew only from assorted compilations and never really thought much of, but I gotta say, this was some pretty good stuff. Fairly political English punk that thrashes along quite nicely and has enough attitude to

appeal to cactus heads and baldies alike. This is a reissue of their first album, with assorted singles tracks tacked on and some really good liner notes to give you an idea where these guys and girl were coming from. All in all, a great introduction to a band I now wish I'd paid more attention prior to. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

PEPPERMINTS, THE:
Jesus Chryst: CD

I generally avoid bands that sound like they're trying to be the Melvins, but when a band can sound sort of like the Melvins without sounding like they're actually trying to do so, and when they're seventy-five percent ladies to boot, I'm on board like Gord(on). Retarded record title notwithstanding (the last one was called *Sweet Tooth Abortion*—much better), the Peppermints' bluntly sparkling exercise in thud power is a solid monolith of intention, and not inept, loose, noisy or shrill in any way. —Cuss Baxter (Paw Tracks)

PHANTOM LIMBS:
Random Hymns: CDEP

Way too fuckin' short for my taste, but any new material from one of the best punk/death rock bands on the planet is more than appreciated. Their sound is all mohawked clowns wreaking havoc in the midst of one truly wicked fucking carnival. Mr. Dark in Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes* would no doubt be cranking this up to eleven. If by some fluke you've managed to miss hearing anything by these guys, I suggest you rectify the situation immediately. —Jimmy Alvarado (GSL)

PLANO: Brigadoon: CD
Weird soundtrack music for B-movie

films that span the time of the '60s through the '80s. —Donofthedeat (Mint)

PLASTIC CONSTELLATIONS, THE: Mazatlan: CD

I realize that dissing this band is the equivalent, to some, of pissing napalm on one of Minnesota's sacred indie cows, but this form of angular indie rock isn't the one that does anything for me. The musical parts seem to change every half-second or so and there's too much pointless noodling here (and frankly, the chops aren't that technical); it's basically the post-punk equivalent of prog rock. When combined with the vocals—which sometimes verge on rap and otherwise take their cues from all of post-core—there just isn't much here for me to like. For fans of whatever post-core indie darling happens to be the rage right now. —Puckett (2024 Records)

PLATE-O-SHRIMP/ THE UNSTUCK: Split: 7"

Plate-o-Shrimp: Their website describes them as "high-energy punk-style/power-pop rock," and I guess that's accurate, based on what's here. The one original and cover of DOA's "Fuck You" here ain't bad, but not quite memorable, either. The Unstuck: Punk rock, poppy in an un-bad way, catchy in a head-bobbing way. The Unstuck win this round. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.plate-o-shrimp.com)

PLAYERS CLUB: Coextinction: CD

I think that when one picks up a CD by a group that calls themselves the Players Club, it's perfectly valid to expect rap music and not post-Helmet/Unsane sludge metal. Shit, now I gotta put my Kangol and Adidas away, cuz these guys be bringin' the wrong noise. —Jimmy Alvarado (Arclight)

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PLEASE MR. GRAVEDIGGER: *Throw a Beat:* CDEP
Arty skronk rock. Songs are short, vocals are screamed; you know the drill. —Jimmy Alvarado (Pluto)

PLEASE MR. GRAVEDIGGER: *Throw a Beat:* CDEP

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I fucking get it already. You scream a lot, play angular guitar lines and throw in some choogling keyboard lines for good measure. Slow it down a little and it sounds like electro-clash to me—the Numbers, maybe? Erase Errata? I'm sure there must be some bastardized new wave of no-wave connection that I'm missing, but this just sounds like jumping on the bandwagon of a trend that's already over and wasn't hugely interesting to begin with. —Puckett (Pluto)

POINTED STICKS:

Perfect Youth: CD

Don't let the name fool you into thinking this is a hardcore band. This is the 25th anniversary re-issue of some of the best Canadian pop with punk sensibilities (spiky pop) ever released. I put this up on a pedestal with The Go-Go's *Beauty and the Beat*, The Vapors' *New Clear Day*, and Elvis Costello's *My Aim Is True*. Non-sappy, exciting, timeless (well, two and half decades with no sign of obvious wear) pop that, if you're in the mood to sing along to instead of shaking your fist to, you can't go wrong with. Great for dates, also great as "ambassador music," music you can introduce to people who "don't really like punk," so they'll soften up a little bit before you turn up the heat. Geek notes: Dimwit, drummer of the Subhumans, joined them pretty early on and the songs off of their 7" are the bonus tracks. —Todd (Sudden Death)

POTSHOT: *Dance to the Potshot Record:* CD

This is their fifth full length? Where have I been? Not that I have been the biggest fan of ska lately, but this band from Tokyo plays some fun stuff that reminded me of Screeching Weasel, Beatnik Termites, and a little bit of the Queers if you added some horns. Catchy choruses of bad Engrish mixed with some solid fun. It really brings me back to the '90s when I really loved this kind of stuff. I really could dance to this record, but not in public. That would be embarrassing! —Donofthedeath (Asian Man)

PRINCESS: *Self-titled:* CD

Their website claims that Princess "willfully pushes musical contradiction and confusion to its elegant limits," and I can go along with that to a fair degree. It kinda reminds me of early Devo meeting hip-hop sensibility with some John Zorn thrown in for flavor. (Or, is that flava?) Those around me right now claim that its experimental nature gets annoying because they're trying too hard to be clever, and at times that's true. Intentional enjambment of at-odds musical stylings can be hit or miss; when this hits, I'm enraptured, and when it misses I go racing for the skip button. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Tony Chaos)

RAT BYTE: *Self-titled:* 7"

These guys have a thing for early '80s hardcore and it shows in their songwriting—not too fast, no metal pollution in the guitars, and plenty of teenage pissed-offness to go around. Nice to see a song called "Fuck the Cops" on a punk record again. —Jimmy Alvarado (FNS)

REAL LOSERS, THE:

Gimme Action: 7"

Geez, by looking at the cover art—with the heads of this boy-girl-boy band pasted atop tiny cartoon character bodies—I'd expect something a little more malt shoppe oriented, like Junior Varsity; at bare minimum, sort of a barely competent Rock & Roll Adventure Kids type thing. Imagine the bedlam and tumult that erupted when the needle hit the vinyl and—after one brief delay when I checked to see if the needle had fuzz on it or something (always a good sign)—I was bombarded with a bunch o' fuzzed-out-to-fuck, needles-so-far-into-the-red-that-they're-now-going-the-other-way-on-the-color-circle-and-are-now-into-the-magenta pounding (and when I say "pounding," I don't speak metaphorically—the drummer only uses a snare, a cymbal, and a floor tom. That leaves little room for paradiddles and the like) that sounds like what The Go's crazy teenage siblings might let loose in the basement when they got home from their after-school jobs of picking up candy bar wrappers strewn along the roadsides where Stooges trod—with, of course, just enough Kennedy/Johnson-era kitsch flowing thru the proceedings to keep it reet. *Thank you sir, may I have another?* BEST SONG: "Rejected at the High School Dance" BEST SONG TITLE: "Dum Dum Baby" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: This is the best sleeve AND the best record I got to review this issue, so whomever said that you can't judge a book by its cover can go fuck himself. —Rev. Nørb (High School Reject)

REASON OF INSANITY:

Self-titled: LP

This record is a wonderful time machine that will swoop you back to 1987 and drop you smack dab in the middle of the pit at a DRI/Cryptic Slaughter show. Everything is perfect, from the so-bad-it-rules Pushead-inspired study hall notebook doodle artwork to the badass, blown-out production and LOTS and LOTS of songs. Fuck this new-school shit of four songs on a seven inch. This monster has twenty-eight motherfucking songs on it. Lyrics about killing cops, fucking the man, nuclear war, you know how it goes. It even has one of those sweet collage inserts with show flyers and drunk fat dudes and wicked pits and the whole bit. This record is totally fun and if you like fun you will totally like this record. —Ben Snakepit (Psycho Wolf, no address)

RIISTETTYT: *Kahleet:* 7"

The latest from these guys, who appear to have reshifted their focus back to playing the straight ahead hardcore that made 'em all those millions back in the '80s. There's a bit more Discharge in the mix than I remember them having, but damn if it ain't sweet as hell when you hear someone put that influence to good use. This is destined to be a classic, as well it should be. —Jimmy Alvarado (Havoc)

RIISTETTYT: *Tuomiopäivä:* 7"

A reissue of an EP by this highly respected Finnish band, first recorded back in 1984 and released in 1991. Not as metallic as some of their later stuff, this is just pure, undiluted hardcore, pissed off and taking no prisoners. The pressing is limited to 2550 copies, so start scrambling for it before it slips back into obscurity again. —Jimmy Alvarado (Havoc)

RIISTETTYT:

Valtion Vankina: LP

Skitsofrenia: 12" EP

In a generous move akin to getting five hundred free boxes of peanut butter Girl Scout cookies, Havoc offers up reissues of this venerable band's first album and 12" EP, both from 1983 and, frankly, the world is suddenly a better place. From its opening cover of the Varukers' "Protest and Survive" to the closing "Kukaan Ei Välttä," *Valtion Vankina* is Finnish thrash of the highest order, the aural equivalent of being slapped around for a few days by a four-thousand-pound gorilla with a toothache. Its unrelenting ferocity has withstood the test of time and could easily hold its own against damn near any hardcore band currently walking the planet. While it isn't wound up quite as tight, *Skitsofrenia* is no less crucial a listen, with more than its share of wild, energetic thrashing, supplemented by the occasional slower-burning tune to stave off any potential eruptions of spontaneous combustion. I gotta remember to give Felix Havoc a hug and thank him profusely if ever I meet him for bringing these, and so many other fjordcore classics from the likes of Kaaos, back from obscurity, even if it is in this case for only five-hundred copies of each. Maybe I'll send a couple of boxes of Girl Scout cookies instead. So mandatory for the collection that to even say so is a wasted effort. —Jimmy Alvarado (Havoc)

ROSA: *I Mississippi You:* CD

Refreshing acoustic punk with a country twinge and a wink of an eye. —Mr. Z (Plan-it-X)

ROSEMARY'S BABIES:

Talking to the Dead: CD

Collected here are what I'm assuming constitute the complete sessions that resulted in the band's 1983 *Blood Lust* 7" EP, plus some live tracks recorded at CBGB around the same time. What you get is twenty-five tracks of east coast hardcore that is very much of its time from a group whose biggest claims to fame is that they come from the same NJ scene that spawned the Misfits and that their drummer was none other than Eerie Von, who went on to play bass in Samhain and Danzig. While they sound nothing like their more famous neighbors, they do have a certain charm of their own, as evidenced by songs like "Let's Molest 10-Year-Olds," "Fake Babies," "Alice in Murderland" and "Attack of the 50-Foot Cowboy." Only downside to this is that, unlike the original EP, the cover of this ain't hand colored. Bummer. —Jimmy Alvarado (Ghastly)

ROTTEN FRUITS, THE:

Abomination: 7"

Holy crap! Did The Evaporators move to Chicago to start a "homocore" band? Seriously, this singer sounds so much like our own beloved Nardwuar The Human Serviette, that it's scary. Rather than sing about cheese addictions, rashes and obscure Canadian historical oddities, The Rotten Fruits sing about being gay, and having sex with skinhead boys. The record isn't bad, but I just can't get past how much it sounds like The 'Vaps. —Ty Stranglehold (Criminal IQ)

ROUE: *Upward Heroic Move:* CD

Skronky art rock. No big whoop. —Jimmy Alvarado (Exit Stencil)

RUBBERMILK ORCHES-TRA: *When in Rome (Revolution):* CD

Quirky trampoline dorkcore with rubbery bass lines and space lab guitar noodling and post-modernistic vocal stylings. In other words: Primus junior. As it turns out, I found out a long time ago that my God-given allotment for liking this overly carbonated kind of rock music is one-album's-worth—and that was used up with Primus' *Frizzle Fry* album long, long ago. Now this stuff just mostly makes me dizzy and gives me gas. Sorry fellas, this just isn't my cup of pork soda. —Aphid Peewit (Chocolate Stain)

SADDLE TRAMPS:

Nashville Swinger: CD

Wait'll the big guns get a whiff of this one. The Saddle Tramps are on par with legendary gold-standard groups like BR5-49, Bastard Sons of Johnny Cash, the Derailers, Shaver, the Paladins, and the Blasters—well-balanced and well-written country rock. Capable of pounding out spaghetti westerns, blistering psychobilly, and Mariachi/ Norteño-infused country (Tex-Mex), the band rounds out their sound with a light-hearted wit similar to Robbie Fulks and the swaggering confidence associated with Twistin' Tarantulas. Snicker-inducing titles include: "How Can I Say I Love You (with a Shotgun in My Mouth)?" "My Dick's Too Big," "Cotton Pony Express," and "(You Put the) Cunt in Country." They've also thrown in a surprising cover of the Vandals' "Susanville." Live with three studio tracks. —Jessica T (Split 7)

SCRUBS, THE:

Return to the Basement: CD

Painfully plain Midwest-mall emo punk watered down for the most suburban of appetites. Nice guys finish last. —Jessica T (Nice Guy)

SHAKIN' NASTIES/ THE HATE PINKS: *Split 7"*

Shakin' Nasties: They've got a nice balance between the modern beach punk sound (a la Hostage Records), mixing snideness with sharpness, and splint it with the best trappings of new wave: tight transitions, great interludes, and spot-on songwriting. They made me think of a stylish suicide. Everything's well ordered, but feels fatalistic. Hatepinks: French version of the Briefs, which isn't bad at all. They've got the snot, sarcasm, and the bounce in spades, and with catchy song titles like "Kissing Cops with My Ass," they're fun to hum to when you're getting groceries. Not essential, but fun nonetheless. The packaging is great. Clear insert over a full-color cover gives it a ton of dimension, and it's on thick vaseline-clear vinyl. —Todd (Relax-O-Matic Vibrator)

SHARK SOUP:

Self-titled: CDEP

Psychobilly from Germany with one part stand up bass, one part guitar, and one part drums to create a trio; more fun than the Stray Cats and in league with Tiger Army. I'm grateful that this was released in the EP format instead of a full length. With songs not clocking in more than three minutes, this is an easy and enjoyable listen. —Donofthedeath (Shark Soup)

SHATTERED FAITH:

Bootleg: CD

Okay, gripes first: 1) What is this insistence in using the version of "Right Is

Right" with the guitar intro cut off? If the original master wasn't available with the intro intact, why not find a pristine copy of the second *Rodney on the Roq* comp and use that instead? Most perplexing of all, who decided starting off the disc with that song was a good idea? 2) Why are the *Life Is...* comp tracks absent and replaced with the vastly inferior *Volume 2* versions? Goblin did a fine job singing on them, and one of 'em, "The Omen," isn't represented here at all. 3) Given the number of rarities that didn't make it on here, why the inclusion of so much stuff readily available on the CD GTA put out a couple of years ago? Seems like such a waste, you know? Now that I've gotten that out of the way, let me say that any collection highlighting Shattered Faith's "golden era" is friggin' mandatory listening. Although much is missing here, the fact that the inclusion of all the tracks from *The Future Looks Bright* comp, "Discontent" from the *Who Cares* comp, and one of the two tracks from the *Destroy L.A.* comp make this an invaluable addition to the collection of any self-respecting punker. Bitching aside, I'm stoked as hell to hear these songs again. —Jimmy Alvarado (Finger)

SHITGIVEITS, THE: *Let's Get Shitfaced: CDEP*

It's hard to place exactly what these guys have been influenced by. It definitely reminds me of a mixture of early Grimple with the bass lines and hints of pop. I can also tell these guys like the Meatmen because of the over-the-top lyrics and early '80s hardcore style. The recording is shitty, but it's hardcore, so it works. A few songs are sung and a few screamed. There are a few

songs where they throw in some blast beats. This is a decent hardcore record that brings the early '80s and early '90s styles together nicely. This looks like a bootleg of some early stuff, because there are notes saying this was recorded in '94 and '96. I wouldn't call it groundbreaking, but I'm pretty into it. —Newtim (In Your Face)

SHITGIVETS, THE: *Vicious Circles and American Dreams: CD*

Mediocre hardcore/crusty punk. So-so recording. But I can't be a hater, because I've probably made demos that sounded exactly like this. —Mr. Z (Loud and in Your Face)

SHIVER: *Last Rides of the Midway: CD*

An excellent recording of a wholly unremarkable pop punk band. Kudos to Billy Stevenson and Jason Livermore for their ability to make even the mundane sound good. —Jimmy Alvarado (Da Core)

SHOP FRONTS: *Self-titled: 7"*

Decent punk rock with enough thud to make it interesting, but not enough oomph to make it crucial. Compared to some of the other amazing releases this label is responsible for, this was a bit of a letdown. Not that the band sucked or anything, but I was just expecting outright amazing considering the source. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rapid Pulse)

SKIT SYSTEM: *Enkel Resa Till Rännstenen: LP*

A reissue of a record the band released in 2001, this is a fine example of modern Scandinavian hardcore at its heaviest. These guys take the requisite

Discharge influence and just fucking run with it in a direction that just pummels the senses like until all that's left of you when you're done is a quivering blob of flesh colored Jell-O. Recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (Havoc)

SLANDERIN': *A Rumba of Rattlesnakes, A Murder of Crows: CD*

This band is very popular—but heavily formulaic and predictable. Nearly redeeming quality: the lead singer (Chrisian Slander) has that instantly panty-creaming, come-here-dirty-whore gravelly voice, just like Demented Are Go. That just sends me every time. But not enough to keep listening to this album. Tangent: One thing that bothers me about psycho is that a lot of singers think they have to sing forcefully like this to be psycho—but there are scant few who can actually pull it off. So please, sing within your range and don't force it. It's unnatural for most of you. —Jessica T (Split 7)

SLEDGEHAMMER: *Your Arsonist: CD*

Way too much metal, way too little originality, and way too unimaginative to warrant a second listen. If I wanna hear aggressive music involving metal of any kind, I'll put on Einstürzende Neubauten's first album. —Jimmy Alvarado (Martyr)

SLOPPY MEATEATERS: *Conditioned by the Laugh Track: CD*

Music marketed for the Hot Topic set that gives me the same sinking feeling when I see bands like Simple Plan or

Good Charlotte marketed as punk. —Donofthedeat (Orange Peel)


SLOW POISONERS: *Melodrama: CD*

The Slow Poisoners are campy but their delivery of this shitt-y art-rock is deadpan, theatrical, and strangely, it works. It is melodrama—I feel like I should have worn my ostrich-feathered hat and paid for a dim candlelit dinner of Cornish game hen with bread pudding and a tinkling glass of sherry while the actors pantomime behind the sheet stretched across the stage. This sensation plus the Mystery!-esque song titles ("Act Two: Nefarious Deeds," "He Who Gets Slapped") and player-piano ditties leaves the impression that this is solely a performance theatre duo who would change direction with the Grand Perseverance of the Most Northerly Wind. Why invest long-term in such unpredictable behavior? —Jessica T (Roctopus!, no address)

SNAKEBITE: *Every Bad Idea Is a Good Idea: 7"*


"RRRAAAWWWR!!" is how this record starts off. Fast, pissed-off, good ol' New Jersey hardcore. I love this kinda shit. It makes me feel like I felt when I saw Tear It Up in 2002. Ah, the good ol' days. It's got a cool Winston Smith-looking collage artwork, good, angry lyrics, and blistering production. There used to be a shitload of bands like this, but it kinda seems like the thrashcore fad is dying out. Good for Snakebite, 'cause they're too good to get lumped in as just another generic thrash band. They're better than that, and this record is the fucking proof. This is music to punch out windows to. —Ben Snakepit (Don Giovanni)

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SNUFF: *Six of One, Half a Dozen of the Other: 2 x CD*

I was first introduced to Snuff via the *Abbey Raid 1: Fuck EMI* comp LP that came out, I believe, in the late '80s. On what label? I don't know and I'm looking at the record right now. They play the Tommy James and the Shondells song "I Think We're Alone Now." I thought it was brilliant. Most of the stuff that was coming out of the UK that I was listening to was more crossover metal or thrash. To hear a band play with so much melody, but still had the rawness of punk fascinated me. When I saw a copy of their first 7" *Not Listening*, I bought it without thinking twice. I'm not good at being a completist when it comes to record collecting, but I have about fifteen different Snuff releases, including some of the offshoots like *Guns and Wankers* and a *Dogpiss CD*. They are on my all-time favorite list of bands. They are outside of the cookie cutter of bands and are a band that stands the test of time. You can listen to one of their early releases and listen to a current one and they both are incredibly enjoyable. So disc one is a good sampling for a greatest hits. Enjoyable from start to finish. Not a stinker in the bunch. Disc two is a real treat. It has so many tracks that I have not heard before: B-sides of singles I don't own, unreleased tracks and bonus tracks from records that I never knew existed. But to make things go full circle, the first track is "I Think We're Alone Now." Even though it is referenced that it was on the *Lie to Me* comp, I know this has been on a number of comps through the years. But hearing a cover of Macy Gray's "I Try" made me grin like a monkey with a

banana. I'm not real big on greatest hits packages, but this one was done right and is quite enjoyable. Now if they would only come back to the states again to tour. —Donofthedeat (Fat)

SNUFF: *Six of One, Half a Dozen of the Other: 2 x CD*

Where do I start with Snuff? Well, I was led to them in '94 when told that they shared members with Leatherface. That was enough for me so I went out and got *Demmamussabeonk...* And then all the other records as fast as I could. Yep, Snuff is one of those bands that can wrench just about any emotion out of me but in the end leave me wanting more and more. Disc one covers the "hits" quite well. Well-rounded and a good listen. Disc two is the gravy for fans. It's got all that Snuff craziness that we know and love (live antics, wacky covers and just plain good songs) and more. Highly recommended. The whole package is a great way for someone to get into the band, but I would really suggest getting all of the records NOW! —Ty Stranglehold (Fat)

SOME GIRLS: *The DNA Will Have It's Say: CDEP*

(Super-Extended Rock Critic Codeine Trance Mix)

I haven't figured out everything I need to say about this record yet; I usually have an album or two that I struggle with every year and this time, it's because these six minutes are simply too fucking dense to parse on even the twentieth or thirtieth listen. Perhaps it's because these sounds are the aural embodiment of how I'm feeling lately; next Monday, I'm heading in for my second operation in less than a month

to try to fix some serious health problems. The ferocious, grisly sounds on this EP mirror the recent horror of my body—spitting hemorrhaged blood into the sink, looking at MRIs of cranial bone erosion, coughing up unidentifiable masses of solid organic matter that are the shape and size of the first two knuckles of my little finger. My body, at the moment, exists somewhere between the abject and the Kristevan sense of the other; this EP falls along similar lines, both alienated and alienating, ostracized and ostracizing. It is the other side of pop music, the deformed thalidomide twin revealing (and revering) the ugliness which is glossed over by production values and marketing strategies. To understand what it sounds like, imagine running an industrial meatgrinder at full power until it starts to smoke and rattle, until it breaks down completely—and fill it with anguished yelps and screams. It sounds like warfare—the sound of machine guns and dying soldiers caught in concertina wire. It is openly hostile and abrasive; it is guitar-driven and grinding. It is musical dermabrasion for boring ideas expressed in dull ways by uninteresting people and in a decade in which some punk bands have essentially become collaborators, the musical equivalent of the Vichy French (and still more seem to aspire to that capitulation). Some Girls defiantly throw potato mashers whilst engaged in door-to-door partisan combat. This is, effectively, musical terrorism in any sense that matters. It is also the only logical response to contemporary music—the proper reaction to blandness is a sprint to an extreme, to seek out new terrain and leave the old world

behind and the new ground unmapped. Let others follow at their own risk; whether they also find the way is irrelevant because they will find something new regardless. In many ways, Some Girls occupies similar music space as other seditious musical minds like Albert Ayler, John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, Archie Shepp, and Ornette Coleman—not in the musical style, but the approach, in the sense that something more is going on or could be happening and that ignoring what is known and staring into the abyss may reveal exactly what that is while teetering on the edge of chaos. These songs spill over with dizzyingly complex musical ideas; like a reservoir well past capacity. Rather than explore an idea or two, Some Girls throws a mass of concepts into a blender and liquefies them beyond recognition, transforming them into a corrosive substance which will eat through steel and concrete, and then plays the result faster than I ever thought humanly possible. The lyrics aren't what I expect from grindcore or hardcore; they're simply too literary, using near-rhymes and alliteration to craft images and borrow ideas from both prose and poetry. There is also humor here, although it's hanging from a gallows as Wes spits out lines like "Yea, well, fate is fucking romantic if you can get off on failure." Like most of the albums that I love, this EP requires just a little more engagement and commitment; it is not easy to absorb and it is not catchy in any traditional way (we aren't really talking about verse-chorus construction here). This record requires that you dedicate yourself to it a bit, that you put aside what you think you know about music



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and engage it on its own terms—it draws you onto its own ground for the fight, which is a dangerous place for you to be and an immediate disadvantage. However, you will learn from the beating this record dishes out, even though it's only six minutes long, and is not for the faint of heart or for people who have weak stomachs. You will learn, you will expand your musical horizons, and you will grow. (Side note: While it's true that other bands have created similar records—Napalm Death, Universal Order Of Armageddon, The Locust, et. al., just to name a few—Some Girls happens to do it exceedingly well. 'Nuff said. For now.) —Puckett (Three One G)

SOME GIRLS: *The DNA Will Have It's Say*: CDEP

Seven songs in a little over six minutes. Comes with a video that shows the band playing, paint being thrown against a wall, and dudes making out. The juxtaposition of the music (a la Combat Wounded Veteran, the Locust, Reversal of Man, etc.) and the album art (super-bright colors, rainbows, a winged bunny with its guts falling out) is brilliant. Charged, frantic hardcore that's maybe a little too cute and smart for its own good, but I dig it. Karen from the Yeah Yeah Yeahs screeches along with the boys on one song. The typo in the album title is theirs, not mine. —Keith Rossion (Three One G)

SOUTH FILTHY: *Crackin' Up*: LP

South Filthy are some legends from the '90s (Monsieur Jeffrey Evans, Jack Oblivian Yarber, Walter Daniels) showing their roots by doing legendary songwriters' work from back in the day; songs by Marvin Rainwater, Tom T. Hall, Gino Washington, Bo Diddley, and others are covered here. Soul, blues, old school country—respectability. I hope it makes the true crossover and plays in truck stops. Two-hundred and fifty copies are a deluxe edition double vinyl set with their first album on Sympathy. —Speedway Randy (Rockin' Bones)

SOVIETTES, THE: *LP III*: CD

The Soviettes' *LP II* was easily one of my top five albums of last year. Their *LP I* was in my top five for the year before. So the real question with *LP III* was whether or not they could keep up the trend. Three top five albums in three years. That's a lot to ask of any band. My expectations were so high that I couldn't imagine being anything but disappointed. And, to be honest, my first listen was a little tepid. I wasn't sure if this album could stand up to their first two. There was that third song that sounded like Pat Benatar could've sung it. And there are definite rock star moments to some of the songs: big power chords and riffs that sound like they could become guitar solos. Still, there was enough of the Soviettes to get me to spin it again. As songs started separating themselves and all the parts started fitting together, this album made sense. It's punk rock and eighties pop and some of the best elements of fellow Minneapolis bands like the Selby Tigers and Dillinger Four. It's also never far from my stereo. I burned an extra copy to keep in my truck. I can't stop listening to it. It's early to say, but I think the Soviettes are gonna make my top five list three years running. —Sean (Fat)

SPACE CRETINS: *Rocket Roll*: CD

Decent enough junkie rock with frighteningly disposable lyrics. Produced by Jack Endino. —Jimmy Alvarado (Killing Pig, no address)

SPACEHORSE: *Self-titled*: CDEP

I love promotional material sometimes. This label proclaims that this band is fast hardcore in the vein of Double O, Die Kreuzen, Battalion of Saints, Articles of Faith, and the Offenders. Being an old guy, let's look at this claim. The bands mentioned all sound uniquely different from each other. I will give them hints of Double O, Articles of Faith, and the Offenders. I don't hear the Die Kreuzen and definitely not Battalion of Saints. You know what this band sounds like to me? Ciril. —Donofthedeath (Gravity)

STARVATIONS, THE: *Gravity's a Bitch*: CD

I've been waiting for *Gravity's a Bitch's* release for months now. See, not too many albums get me all worked up nowadays, and unless Greg Cartwright appears on a recent release, I typically pass up the new stuff for something stupid like a Little Eva 7". But not the Starvations! No, no, especially taking into account 2003's masterpiece, *Get Well Soon*. ANYWAY, I'd heard some of the new stuff at shows and had a feeling this record's arrival was going to cure some of my audiophile/record collecting withdrawals. And it totally did! Fuck, *Gravity's a Bitch* totally rules! The album's success lies in the Starvations' growth as songwriters and musicians; Gabriel Hart comes through again with chord progressions so perfect, I keep listening to individual songs over and over again—it's like when Allan Freed would play songs to death, only I don't get payola and have never been sauced on the air. Hart's slide guitar is fucking ridiculous, too—"Nightshade Sweats" reminds me of some Kid Congo's work on *Las Vegas Story*. His formidable, morbid narratives are back too, most notably in the "were going on vacation as soon as Blind Lemon Jefferson's ghost comes through with the tickets" blast of "Lost at Sea." Jean-Paul Garnier is quite possibly L.A.'s best bassist not named Tommy Branch. The dude works the fretboard like Rob Ritter did on *Miami* and has something most bassists don't have: creativity! Piano/accordion player Vanessa Gonzalez continues to demonstrate how integral her multi-instrumental pallet is to The Starvations' unique sound. And therein lies the Starvations' secret: they know how to write idiosyncratic, solid tunes and play their instruments really fucking well. They also sound well-versed in America's musical history, a lot like the Clash in '79 and the Gun Club in '81. If you know those bands, you know how fucking scary that is. And until I drive my roommates' nuts with repeats of this record, I'll finally be able to leave my In the Red Records altar unmanned for longer than a day. Goddamn. —Ryan Leach (GSL)

STATE, THE: *No Illusions*: 7"

One of the good things to come out of the whole Killed By Death phenomenon is that a lot of attention has been focused on bands that otherwise would've continued to wallow in obscurity and remained unheard of outside of

the small group of people who actually bought one of the, say, two hundred copies of a given release by said band. So much about punk and hardcore in the '80s (at least in the circles I ran around in) was not as much about whether you had the latest from more popular bands like Hüsker Dü or 7 Seconds (although being familiar with them didn't hurt) as it was about what amazing obscurity you stumbled upon that week. Through this ritual, bands like the Mentally Ill, Void, Italy's Raw Power, Germany's Inferno and damn near any Scandinavian band to commit music to tape garnered more than a couple of fans as far away from their hometown as East Los Angeles could be. Sadly, I would further venture to say that it's that peculiar punk habit that somewhere went haywire and resulted in dumb-fucks unclear on the concept paying ridiculous prices for records they're only gonna store in a hermetically sealed box in an airless room and never, ever play and, thus, taking such gems out of circulation. Fuck that. Records are supposed to be played often and, more importantly, shared with others who might find them crucial. So this whole bootleg and/or reissue culture of reintroducing long gone bands back into the punk rock conversation is just peachy, I say. Not only has it kick started the musical career of the Queers, which may or may not be a good thing depending on how you feel about them, but it's also exposed a lot of people (myself included) to bands they never new existed, such as the State, which brings us to the record currently up for discussion. This is a reissue, not a bootleg, of this Michigan band's first of two releases (the other being a 12" that, according to some sources, is nowhere near the caliber of this, but I digress). The band cranks out seven blasts of quirky thrash that are finished faster than it takes to read the lyrics. Although they don't really sound like them, comparisons would lead to other now-obscure Midwestern bands, like Die Kreuzen, whose *Cows and Beer* EP was just as crazed, chaotic, and quirky as what's here, and the Fix, who were just about as rough around the edges and mean-sounding as these guys. Ultimately, this deserves a spot in hardcore's hallowed halls just as much as any of the genre's more celebrated groups. Thanks to Felix Havoc, you can get a copy of this bad boy, which was mastered from the original tapes and features a faithful reproduction of the original cover layout, for 3/100 the price you would pay for a copy of the original. Better snatch it up quick, though, 'cause there's only a thousand of 'em out there (well, 999 if you count the one that ain't gonna be leaving my home anytime soon). If you do manage to get one, be sure to play it often and share it with as many friends as you can. —Jimmy Alvarado (Havoc)

STATIC AGE, THE: *Neon Nights Electric Lives*: CD

If you grew up in the 1980s, you know that you simply couldn't get away from music like this—dark, synth and effects-driven gothic pop that echoes for days. Think somewhere along the lines of the guitar tones of A Flock of Seagulls with the general mood of B-Movie or The Cure; think along the darker, unhappier fringes (though not quite as dark or unhappy as Christian Death or Joy Division—Clan Of

Xymox or another synth-driven 4AD band with pop edges will do nicely). Toss in a dash or two of shoegaze (like Ride, My Bloody Valentine, Lush, etc.) to round out the songs and provide some musical depth and texture. Add some breathy, crooning vocals (not entirely unlike Flesh For Lulu, only with more of a husky quality). What you should wind up with, as I said when I first heard "It Never Seems to Last"—a song that should (and in any other world would) have been a massive radio hit—is a soundtrack for a John Hughes film that never got made (and think about John Hughes circa *Some Kind of Wonderful* or *Pretty in Pink*, the two movies he made that seemed to capture teen angst and class awareness most honestly). I won't claim that this is brilliant, innovative, or great, but there are times when I don't expect or need a record to change my life; right now, this well-crafted album is perfectly satisfying and that's good enough. —Puckett (Tarantulas)

STRAIGHTJACKET: *Modern Thieves*: CD

Nothing flashy here, just straight ahead punk. As Todd alluded to in his review of their 7" in the last ish, there's hints of greatness here, but oftentimes I feel that it stops just short of those possibilities. Like watching a prizefighter who strings along his opponent, I keep waiting for a knockout blow that never seems to materialize. Instead there is a string of solid body blows and jabs to the face that do the job over time rather than all at once. A good record, but I wanna be KO'd. —The Lord Kveldulfr (TKO)

STRAPS, THE: *The Punk Collection*: CD

Captain Oi shines a spotlight on another band that has fallen through the cracks of time, this one featuring alumni from the class of '78, a number of whom went on to bigger and better things in bands like Theatre of Hate and Sex Gang Children. A number of "guests" make appearances here, including the odd Damned and Subs member. Included here are the tracks from the band's single and album, both of which are fine examples of UK punk at its best, alternating between thudding primitive tunes and proto-post punk experimentation. This 'un's a keeper. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

SUPERSUCKERS: *Devil's Food*: CD

This self-released "Collection of Rare Treats and Evil Sweets" is intended to crash the Supersuckers-bootleg market and "shortens the wait" between studio albums. If you're a SS fan from way back (like the eMPTy days), feverishly sought out dozens of live shows, shamefully bowed out around 1999's *Evil Powers of Rock 'n' Roll*, and wish to God they'd put out another country album, then this is manna from heaven. There are no overtures of shameless Spaghetti-strapped forty-year-old women dry-humping Eddie's leg from the front row while screaming, "Oh, Eddie. Ooohhh, Eddie!" This is not for the rock 'n' jock crowd. This album traverses the group's garage, punk, and country highways and divergent intersections over the course of a sixteen-song (eleven originals and five covers including Outkast, Electric Frankenstein, and Lionel Richie) road

trip. Upbeat ass-shakin' punk in "Shake It Off," country versions of "Doublewide" and "Born with a Tail," a blunt discussion of everyone's favorite makeshift paraphernalia in "Tin Can," a fantastical doo-wop tune with a tablespoon of Andre Williams' humor called "Rubber Biscuit" and a hopeful nod to wishing others well in "End of an Era." Damn, that's good. Now, where'd I put that roach? —Jessica T (Mid-Fi Recordings)

SWEATMASTER:
Tom Tom Bullet: CD

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SWING DING AMIGOS:
The Mongolita Chronicles: CD

The Amigos smack you around like a crack bitch with twenty tracks, most all clocking in at under a minute and a half. Being a trio, these guys have got their shit together. Tight, yet loose, a la Toys That Kill. This disc is a big-ass wall of raw, bleeding rawk that sounds like what Minor Threat would have sounded like if they took to emptying cases of beer and fifths of booze in their spare time. The Amigos would've been a repeat opening band for Black Flag, but lucky you, you get to see The Amigos the next time you get the chance. Don't blow it. —Designated Dale (Rock N Roll Purgatory)

TALK HARD: War Journal: 7"

Here's one that takes me back. Metallic hardcore, but not in the current dark-and-suffering-band-of-the-week mold. I mean this sounds like Struggle or something off of an Ebullition comp from the early '90s much more than it does like Isis or anything off Hydra Head today. It's pissed, it's smart, and there are weird little breakdowns and parts peppered throughout the songs so that it hooks you, keeps you listening, and never turns into a snoozefest. With songs like "American Idle," "Hardcore Kids Say the Darndest Things," and "If Your Local Anarchist Collective Ruled the World," you know what you're getting here: short, furious, intelligent songs by kids that are just as ready to critique the fallacies of their own scene as they are to the government or consumer culture. A twelve-song seven-inch from a band I've never even fucking heard of, and also a record that just so happens to come heartily recommended. —Keith Rosson (Don Giovanni; www.sonofabitchbastard.com)

TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET: Total: CD

I had heard mp3s and must admit I wasn't too impressed. But listening to it now and thumbing through the booklet, I think I'm falling in love. The vocals, lyrics, and attitude rule. If the phrase "pop punk" doesn't scare you, and you're a HUGE Ramones or Lillingtons fan, this disc is for you, hands down. Two thumbs way up. "Stupid Games" is by far the best track on the album. Push the repeat button, QUICK! —Mr. Z (Redscare, www.redscare.net)

TEENAGE CASKET CO.: Dial It Up: CD

Reviewer rule #316: If any of the band members is sporting the last name "Wylde," the odds of the record sucking are upped exponentially. Reviewer rule #848: If one of the song titles is "Bad Girl," and a member of the band is sporting the last name "Wylde," carefully place the offending article down, step away slowly, call for the mass evacuation of a thirty-mile radius, and nuke the whole area to ensure any traces of the offending record have been eliminated. —Jimmy Alvarado (Trashpit)

TEMPER TEMPER: Self-titled: CD

These sons of Milwaukee have a record, and a good one at that. It combines the hypnotic yet adrenalinizing qualities of big beat dance music with the frenetic urgency of a life too short to be lived to full satisfaction, giving it an air of elegant, artful destruction. Magnificent. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Revelation)

THOR: Thor Against the World: CD

I thought there was a bad heavy metal band in the '80s that has used this name that sounded like Manowar. I don't know if this is the same band, but, man, this is painful. This band has the Alice Cooper cheese theatrics to it while being backed by Quiet Riot. It's probably more fun being on the other side making this music, but I'm not amused. —Donofthedeath (Smog Veil)

THROUGH YOU: Silhouette: CD

This thing is absolutely amazing: a classic case of some record label PR dick-

head just firing blind and sending out promos to every magazine with a glossy cover. Through You's got a mixture of "sweet riffs," chunka-chunka hard rock stuff, and acoustic ballads. The vocals alternate between rap rock and an eye-wateringly high, lilting singing. Three of the four members thank God in the liner notes. Includes the lyrical gem, "I see fire in your eyes controlled and molded into stars and God's given you His wonders to hold and blessed this love of ours and it is so unbelievable how beautiful this has become." I read the lyrics to Anna and she started vomiting everywhere. If I had to sum it up in a one-word review (and was allowed a hyphen), I'd say *soul-killing*. If Clear Channel and the CIA ever put their heads together and came up with a black-ops studio band meant to nullify the general populace's will to live, these boys'd be hired on the fucking spot. I predict a 7-Up commercial or two in their future. —Keith Rosson (Parafora)

TORCHE: Self-titled: CD

I don't know anything about Cavity, in which as at least one Torche was, but last year's Floor CD was a top-shelf favorite on the Baxter farm, and two Floors are in Torche, and you can hear it. I also don't really know anything about Queens of the Stone Age, but I think that's the general territory on which tread Torche: heavy on the heavy, but also on the smooth. Guitars are tuned so low you're not sure whether you're hearing them or feeling them, the vocals flow like Guinness and there's hardly any bullshit to fuck with your enjoyment of the rolling of the thunder. The whole thing's under thirty minutes, which is a shame, but you'll find it only

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seems like about twelve. And, yes, I'm ignoring the hideous cover and middle school lines like, "war is beautiful." That's my right. —Cuss Baxter (Robotic Empire)

TOY DOLLS:

Our Last Album?: CD

Dunno whether the title is accurate and this is truly their swan song or they're just having a laugh at our expense, but if it is, indeed, true, then we are the worse off for it. In recent years they've gotten into a groove, of sorts, cranking out LPs that, while not always as manic or inspired as their earliest work, were solid additions to their recorded legacy, and this is no exception. Olga's guitar work is as jaw-droppingly good as ever, Tommy Goober and Dave the Nut provide the requisite precision backing, and the lyrical subject matter remains silly, as evidenced by titles like "No One Knew the Real Emu," and "The Death of Barry the Roofer with Vertigo." This album's cover tune of the Boomtown Rats' "She's So Modern" is serviceable at worst, and there are a couple of "bonus" tracks as well, "Tony Talks Tripe" and a re-recording of "Yul Brynner Was a Skinhead." These guys are/were one of punk's truly original voices and will be missed if this is their last hurrah. —Jimmy Alvarado (SOS)

TOYS THAT KILL:

Don't Take My Clone b/w Breakin' Out: 7"

The hyenas haven't been tamed. The lions haven't been declawed. The wheels on the TTK wagon rarely stop rotating. Secret muscles developed and cardiovascular fitness improved from continuous touring turns what could be

a bunt situation into another crackin' hit. Side A's quintessential TTK: guitars and vocals battling it out like mannered vultures picking at the world's carcass, pure outpourings of dragstripping energy that mess up electronic devices, octopausal drumming, and middle-eastern scaling that only I seem to hear. "Breakin' Out" borrows a Clash riff, is wildly poppy, and may stump existing TTK fans if you don't tell them who it is before playing it. But, man, do I like it. —Todd (Dirtnap)

TRACTOR SEX FATALITY:

Live It Down: 7"

Noise rock from a band that features former members of the Honeymoon Killers, the Gloryholes, and the Primate 5. Annoying in all the right ways, especially "Cagematch," which just might be my favorite new song of the week. —Jimmy Alvarado (Big Neck)

TRIGGERS/ SPITS: Split 7"

The Triggers are the kings and queens of dirt melody. They sound so sloppy and catchy at the same time. I'm a sucker for dual male/female vocals and for ripped-jean, piss-your-pants-and-continue-your-conversation-like-nothing-happened, alcoholic punk, and it's hard to find a finer specimen than the Triggers. They're the Avengers if the Avengers were more crumpled, surly, nihilistic, and toured in a shitty van with a muffler holding on by a guitar string. Spits: It's too soon to put it in cement, but the Spits have the Ramones-height ability to make songs seem too simple, too easy to do, and are played in a way that's obviously as heart-felt. Gloriously retarded and ill at ease. Even at their more fungal (the first track) and noise loopy synthesizery (the second one), I'm willing to fol-

low them down many a dark alley and hear what they stumble over and kick back at. Not for geniuses or people who beat off to complexity, just a damn fine band. —Todd (Puke)

TROPHY:

Made Out of Babies: CD

Face it, guys. No matter how many loud guitars, no matter how many goth/rock/punk riffs you fire off, no matter how much racket you make to try to hide it, your singer still sounds like Bjork. Only when you admit this can the healing truly begin. —Jimmy Alvarado (Neurot)

UNDERHILLS, THE:

What Went Wrong: CDEP

When you're in a band ready to release one of your recordings for the world to hear, you don't say, *Let's not put our band name on the outer packaging!* I really thought this band was called What Went Wrong. There was a symbol with a lower case "u" that was underlined inside a circle. Boy, that sure doesn't say that this is an Underhills CD to a guy who has never heard or seen them before. If I hadn't actually looked at the insert and seen in tiny print that was the band name, I would have never found out. Anyways, this band sounds like early Blink 182 meets the Queens to me. —Donofthedeat (Cabana 1)

URBAN RIOT:

Public Enemies: CD

If the music on this disc was food, I think it would be a meatloaf, with plenty of thick chest hairs baked in and broken teeth sprinkled over the top. With their stubborn, workmanlike attitude, you could say Urban Riot is "lunch-box" street punk, both because of its

utilitarian approach and because these guys sound like they eat entire lunchboxes whole—and I mean the old-school metal kind with the glass-lined thermos inside. Though this is not very tuneful and I can't imagine anything more insipid than people who exert this much effort trying to convince the world what tough-ass galoots they are, this is serviceable oi and it is not without its brutish charms. Pass the ketchup. —Aphid Peewit (Headache)

VAN ERMANS, THE:

Under the Gun: CD

Emo. What does that even mean? It was pretty funny when Screeching Weasel named a full-length *Emo*.

—Mr. Z (Broken Spoke)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

80 Records and We're Not Broke (Yet): 2 x CD

I'll give Level Plane this (and little else); they did the right thing making this a double CD. The first disc is standard label sampler, with tracks from available product, but disc two is all unreleased material. Sadly, the majority of both parts is twisted up from everybody fiddling with high strings, so busy building tension with their weird keys and drone notes and breaking new ground (mm hm) they forget the Riff and Groove, thus neglecting what makes rock music rock music. There are exceptions: Bucket Full of Teeth, Transistor Transistor, Melt Banana, Newgenics, Avorza (eventually) and Nixon do remember to rock; and Air Conditioning and LickGoldenSky (on disc two only! The song on disc one is crap!) are so far from Rock to begin with they can't

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really be said to be missing the boat; they're on the train. -Cuss Baxter (Level Plane)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Dance Hall Troops Vol. 1: CD

The days of the compilation have long been over. Gone are the days of *Someone's Gonna Get Their Head Kicked In* and *Let Them Eat Jellybeans*. Other than a few standouts (Hostage fucking Records!), the compilation record has somehow morphed into the "label sampler." Rather than put a kick ass bunch of songs, labels seem to opt for putting out a weak cross section of their tepid roster. As I noted that this was comp was sponsored by a record label and a clothing company, I was expecting the worst. BOY, WAS I FUCKING WRONG!!! *Dancehall Troops* just may be the savior of the Punk Rock Compilation (along with Hostage fucking Records!). Good Goddamn, this record rules. And the bands, THE BANDS!!! So many good bands, that I'm sure that I'll miss mentioning some of the best ones. It's all good, but here are the standouts. The Sleazies, Die Hunns, Smut Peddlers, Smogtown, Broken Bottles, my local (Victoria, BC) favorites Keg Killers, Curb Slappys... It goes on and on. This thing has been in the stereo since I got it. I'm waiting for Volume Two. -Ty Stranglehold (No Front Teeth)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: **Get Outta Philly: CD**

A mighty fine compilation of punk in all its permutations from, drugged-out surf rock to '60s trash to borderline hardcore to Dolls-influenced rock. Given that this is subtitled

"Rock'n'Roll from the City of Brotherly Love," I was wholly expecting bad bar rock, but this is quite possibly the most consistently good scene overview I've heard since the *Let's Get Rid of L.A.* comp. Featured bands include Thee Minks, The Bad News Bats, Bad Penny, The Chance, Toothless George and his One Man Band, The Blow Goes, The Party Wreckers, Econocaste, The Misteriosos, Dragon City and the Jukebox Zeros. This is gonna get worn out pretty quick. -Jimmy Alvarado (Tick Tick Tick)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: **Live at The Continental / Best of NYC Vol. 1 & Live at The Continental / Best of NYC Vol. 2: CD**

Both of these discs showcase NY bands and artists doing their live thing at the Continental bar, a place where many a van-travelling band has done a gig or two at when their tour pulls through NYC. Both discs boast a gang of names you've come to be familiar with: Joey Ramone, The Ramainz, Jesse Malin, Cheetah Chrome and Handsome Dick Manitoba, Agnostic Front, Cro-Mags, Murphy's Law, The Bouncing Souls, Lunachicks, The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black, Toilet Boys, The Bullies, The Waldos, and a helluva lot more. While the sound lags a bit on some of the tracks, these discs are great background music to crank up for your next inebriated get-together. -Designated Dale (The Continental)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Mixto de Punko! Vol. 2: CD

The faux-Spanish title of this now-series of punk comps still sticks in my

craw (I bet naming a comp *Gringos Going Gaga* or *A Hectare of Honkies* would raise all kinds of hackles), but musically this is a marked improvement over the pop punk crap that permeated the first volume. So far as I'm able to tell, the bulk of the bands here are from California, a number of them residing to the north of Los Angeles County. All but one specialize in hardcore (the lone exception being a noise piece by The Mouse and the Moose) and some heavy hitters are represented here, including KatKiller, Ill Repute, Dr. Know, Bad Samaritans, and The Missing 23rd, with nearly all of them turning in some good work. In short, this is a good compilation (a rarity these days) marred by a truly stupid title. -Jimmy Alvarado (LTE)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Norrland D-Beat Compilation: CD

It never ceases to amaze how the Scandinavians have managed to take the sound and style of a single band, namely Discharge, and turn it into an entire sub-genre. On this comp are nine bands from the northern end of Sweden who take the basic template invented by Cal and the boys more than two decades ago and manage to come up with nine wholly different takes on it. From the metal of Ambulance to the grinding noise of UrUg to the more traditional thrash of Human Waste, a whole host of noise is here, waiting to lay waste to your eardrums and induce convulsions if you crank up the volume anywhere past four. Besides the above, other bands representing here are Ana Barata, Earth Died Screaming, 365 Dagar Av Synd, Reign of Bombs, Auktion, and Uncle Charles, the latter

of which provides the requisite Mob 47 cover, "Rustning är ett brott." Most definitely a comp worth tracking down. -Jimmy Alvarado (Wasted Sounds)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Oi! Made in Holland: CD

A decent enough overview of all things Oi coming from Holland. Musically, it's pretty much along the lines of Oi from most anywhere else in the world, with gruff vocals and lotsa violent sounding band/song names, like "Bootknife," "Fuck 'Em Up," "Another Dead Ref," "Banner of Thugs," and the like. Of the twenty-five tracks here, Discipline's "Hell Is for Heroes" is the standout track, just as it was on their most recent Captain Oi release. Overall, not bad, although I will admit I made a point of not paying any attention to the lyrics lest the illusion be shattered and I would come to the realization that Holland's batch of baldies were just as lame and thick-skulled as so many of their brethren elsewhere. -Jimmy Alvarado (Rebellion)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: **Punkx Unite—Leaders of Today: CD**

A collection of thirty-two so-called "relevant punk bands of today," of which a grand total of three truly stand out, with the remaining "leaders of today" falling somewhere between "very mildly diverting, like a heat rash" and "why bother?" Special mention goes to Complete Control who, in addition to saddling themselves with such a creative and original moniker (yes, I'm being sarcastic), have ripped off Cocksparrer so blatantly that I'm surprised they're not up to their eyeballs in lawsuits. Bands contributing to this include Toxic Narcotic, The Voids,



Monster Squad, Cheap Sex, the Casualties and a myriad of parrot punk bands heavy on the Crazy Color and fashion but anemic on originality, conviction, or substance. Maybe I'm getting a bit old, jaded, and cynical, but as I listen to this, I can't help but think the only thing relevant here is the Dead Kennedy's line, "Punk's not dead it just deserves to die when it becomes another stale cartoon." —Jimmy Alvarado (Sideonedummy)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Smash the States: CD*

One of the truly great things about compilations that has been more or less lost since punk rock became the music industry's latest cash cow is that they were once a great way to get acquainted with what was going on in other parts of the punk rock world, both within a certain geographic area and within a sub-scene. In some cases, they were the only way less affluent scenes could prove their existence to the larger world, and many of them became classics in their own right. In the U.S. alone, *Flex Your Head*, *Boston Not LA*, *Not So Quiet on the Western Front*, *Cottage Cheese from the Lips of Death*, *No New York, Yes LA*, and the *Rodney on the Roq and Life Is...* series introduced the likes of Minor Threat, Void, Jerry's Kids, The Freeze, Gang Green, MDC, 7 Seconds, Urban Assault, Flipper, Whipping Boy, Big Boys, Dicks, DRI, Teenage Jesus and the Jerks, DNA, The Germs, Black Randy, Shattered Faith, Black Flag, Saccharine Trust, and literally hundreds of others. In recent years, however, the once-noble compilation format has seen its reputation sullied by ignoble labels showcasing the meager efforts of their talent pool, much of which sounds

indistinguishable from one song to the next, and faux "regional" comps that are often nothing more than thinly disguised versions of the aforementioned label showcase format. Thankfully, though, it appears that the true "scene" compilation is making a comeback, thanks to the likes of Hostage Records, Lengua Armada, and a few others. Which brings us to this bad boy. Subtitled as "redefining punk rock from the South," a large contingency of the bands here represent the Carolinas, but other parts of that area of the United States are represented as well. The sounds are diverse in execution, with nary a band sounding like another elsewhere on the comp, even though much of what is on here could fall under the "hardcore" umbrella. Most significant is that the lion's share of the groups here do not seem to have any professional affiliation with Suicide Watch Records, who put this out. The only significant gripe I can muster is, outside of email/web addresses, there's a lack of info about the bands provided here. Sure, it saves on printing costs, but, being the curmudgeonly old schooler I am, I like info on the band—in all its spelling error-riddled, cut-out-of-magazines-and-pasted-helter-skelter glory—being provided with the comp. Outside of that, you could do much worse than picking this up and marveling at the racket being raised by the likes of Allergic to Bullshit, My So-Called Band, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Carrie Nations, The Fighting Mailmen, Forgotten Youth, and a bunch of others. Does it rival *Flex Your Head*? No, but it isn't 1981, and this is one cool-ass look at what's going down in the Southern underground circa 2005. —Jimmy Alvarado (Suicide Watch)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Walk the Plank Vol. 1: CD*

DISCLAIMER: My band is on this compilation but I won't mention them any further. Here we have a benefit compilation for a member of one of the bands who has Multiple Sclerosis. That is as good a cause as any, as MS is an evil disease that needs to be stopped. On to the music. The first few bands here kind of dashed my hopes for this. Sort of a post-hardcore emo deal. Uhh...yeah. My discouragement was soon forgot when I got to the middle portion of the disc. Bands such as Love Me Destroyer (ex-Pinhead Circus), Handy with Shovels, Whiskey Kiss and Sack had me rocking. The majority of this rocks and you can't beat a good cause. —Ty Stranglehold (Mutiny)

VARUKERS: *The Riot City Years: CD*

I had a buddy, Matt, back in the '80s with an unflagging adoration for English punk and girl bands. On one trip to the Rock Shop on Hollywood Boulevard, he procured a dubbed cassette with Skrewdriver's *All Skrewed Up* on one side and another band we'd never heard, the Varukers, on the other. Once his initial fascination with the A-side wore out, he began playing the flip with increasing regularity and it soon became a listening staple while cruising East L.A. in his Toyota truck. This disc acted like a kind of time travel back to those misspent summer days for me. Those not familiar with the band will find on this CD tunes that musically fall somewhere between Discharge and the Exploited—mostly fast 'n' furious with lyrics a little more complex than either

of those bands were able to manage in their prime. —Jimmy Alvarado (Step-1 Music)

VCR: Self-titled: CD

This EP is not as bad as the cover art and song names would lead me to think. Best description I can think of is 2005 post-art-punk/synth-rock like the sort of nose-in-the-air stuff you've come to expect from Dim Mak or GSL. It's like a comatose This Is Revenge. For the band consisting of only two keyboards, drums, and bass, it's not all that bad. One thing is for sure: it doesn't seem like the type of band that would be signed to Side One Dummy. I know, tripped me out too. —Mr. Z (Side One Dummy)

VICE SQUAD: *The Riot City Years: CD*

Matt Wingrove's truck, summer 1988. That's what this CD conjures up. My friend Matt was a total Anglophile when it came to punk and a sucker for a band with a girl rockin' the mic, so it was almost a gimme that Vice Squad would be one of his favorite bands (well, them, the Superheroines, Pandoras, and L7, the latter of the three he liked so much he roadied for them during that period), and he played them CONSTANTLY. Normally, some would find such repeated listenings of the same band day in and day out intolerable, but Vice Squad were such a good goddamn band—grade-A '80s British punk fronted by the legendary Beki Bondage—that you really didn't notice that the same tape was being played over and over again. At one point, he bought a copy of every Vice Squad single he could find and, voila, a whole new slew of tunes for our

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listening enjoyment. A good hunk of the tunes that comprised that second Vice Squad tape are here (as well as three songs from a demo by their side band the Sex Aids), essentially the tracks from the pre-*Stand Strong, Stand Proud* singles, all of it crucial listening. Haven't seen Matt since 1991 and last I heard, he was living in San Berdoo. Listening to this, though, with the stereo cranked to its full, wall-shaking maximum, I find myself back in that battered mini-truck of his, complete with "Yogi is a sex dwarf" and "The Rejected" (the name of the band he and Yogi had at the time) graffiti in the bed and exhaust streaming in from the hole in the cab floor, cruising the hills of City Terrace, looking for a gig to go to, some trouble to get into, or some combination thereof. —Jimmy Alvarado (Step-1 Music)

VIKINGS, THE: *The Best Head Ever: 2 x CD*

There are some releases I have no business reviewing. This is one of them. I will pick up practically anything up at Razorcake HQ to review so I can see if it will float my boat, especially the "Mystery Meat" pile where only a few (including the infamous Jimmy Alvarado!) will venture. The Vikings are not my thing, but this band compromises of a former Devil Dog (who I have never listened to) and some Scandinavian dudes including a Turbonegro (who I admit, I have never really spent that much time listening to either). From what this looks like, this is a discography CD with a bonus live disc from a show in Sweden. I can't say that this one grabs me by my sweaty balls. This is a little too straight forward rock for my tastes. But I can tell you that they

do it well. I wasn't completely turned off by listening to this. —Donofthedeat (Just Add Water)

VIOLATORS: *The No Future Years: CD*

Remember these guys from their appearance on one of the *Punk and Disorderly* comps and not being all that impressed with 'em, but this release is another matter entirely. A collection of assorted singles and such that they made while signed to No Future, the bulk of the music here is very dark and experimental, almost post-punk in sound, which was a surprise given their look and their fairly by-the-numbers punk name. The songs, many of which are a bit on the long side, are nevertheless a good listen, with their non-Xerox take on punk, and specifically English punk, it's a nice change of pace in an era (both then and now) when everyone seems more interested in sounding like everyone else. Good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

WILLOWZ, THE: *Talk in Circles: CD*

This band has swiftly devolved to the point where they're at their best when trying to either sound like a) a thrift store version of the second side of the first Television album, or b) some sort of high school biology experiment embarked upon with the aim of finding out what Redd Kross would've sounded like had they been remiss any particularly good songs. The Jefferson Airplane-ish psychedelic she-mumbings, the quasi-free-jazz-improvisations, the neo-White-Stripe-White-Strippings? Uh, no. Please. No. No more. I can't even think of a funny way to say

this. Please stop. Thanks. BEST SONG: "Ulcer Soul," maybe. BEST SONG TITLE: "Linear Communication," although i'm really starting to lean towards "We Can Die Now" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I'd like to thank the Milwaukee Brewers and Washington Nationals baseball clubs, for it was the radio broadcast of your May 16th, 2005 game that made my stopping listening to this CD possible. —Rev. Nørb (Sympathy)

WINKS, THE: *Too Hot to Be This Cool: CD*

Sounds like a post-Supercharger edition of Girlschool (but factoring in some other factor that allows the subjects to rocket thru thirteen songs in eighteen minutes), which is not, in and of itself, enough to seriously renew or resuscitate my flagging interest in The Punk Rock; however, when i clicked on the multimedia content files (that means "movie") and the Quicktime™ file opened up not in a generic player, but in a cool oval with a thick pink border and a Winks logo above the screen and a background that blended from white on the top to pink on the bottom, in what would be the rough equivalent of a 20 lpi screen, with little white control buttons with pink arrows and such on them, well... holy shit, color me reborn. *You heard it here first, folks: MULTIMEDIA CONTENT IS GO!!!* BEST SONG: "Saturday Night" BEST SONG TITLE: I dunno, "Saturday Night" seemed to go down a storm for the Bay City Rollers. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: As much as i love the custom-made winkin' pink Winks Quicktime™ player, it is my sad duty to report that the thing doesn't have a

pause button, and that neither the fast forward nor rewind buttons are functional on my computer. *I frown upon such slipshod functionality!* Also, i can't spell the word "resuscitate" without singing the Sweet Baby song "Resuscitation." —Rev. Nørb (Super Secret)

ZATOPEKS: *Ain't Nobody Left but Us: CD*

Catchy UK pop punk apparently influenced by the sounds of early rock'n'roll with a smattering of Tom Waits-ish sensibility. There's an air of retrospective sentimentality to this, in the sense of "Where have all the good days gone when greasers spent Friday nights getting into fights?" and rock'n'roll was still fresh and simple. Based on the mood on this record, the Zatopeks are hard-charging, looking to rock above all else, but they seem to be a bit ill-at-ease in a modern world that doesn't always appreciate the beauty of simplicity. The lesson here is that there can (and should be) excitement in the seemingly mundane, be it a three-chord tune or chance meetings that seem innocuous at first but still haunt us for reasons unknown. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Stardumb)



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- **Intricate**, www.intricaterecords.com
- **Invisible Hand**, PO Box 241, Orland Park, IL 60462
- **Ipecac**, PO Box 1778, Orinda, CA 94563
- **John Francis & Imposters, The**, 140 Noe St., SF, CA 94114
- **Just Add Water**, PO Box 420661, SF, CA 94142
- **Kapow**, PO Box 29597, LA, CA 90029
- **Kevin K**, PMB 108, 9061 U.S. 19 North, Pinellas Park, FL 33782
- **Kill Normal**, PO Box 17, Durham, CT 06422-0017
- **Kill Rock Stars**, 120 NE State Ave., PMB, 418, Olympia, WA 98501
- **Kineto**, www.kineto.net
- **Kuriosa**, Beizenveld 48, 7943 MC Meppel, The Netherlands
- **Level Plane**, PO Box 7926, Charlottesville, VA 22906
- **Light in the Attic**, PO Box 31970, Seattle, WA 98103
- **Liquor and Poker**, 2323 El Segundo Blvd., Hawthorne, CA 90250
- **Long Bored**, www.longboredrecords.com
- **Lookout!**, 3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703
- **Loud and in Your Face**, PO Box 22661, San Diego, CA 92192
- **LTE**, 1344 Oak Trail St., Thousand Oaks, CA 91320
- **Mad Butcher**, Kurze Geismarstr.6, D-37073, Göttingen, Germany
- **Mad Cowboys**, www.madcowboys.cjb.net
- **Made in Mexico**, PO Box 70297, Seattle, WA 98127
- **Martyr**, PO Box 955, Harriman, NY 10926
- **Mid-Fi**, PO Box 666, Heber City, UT 84032
- **Mindless**, 410 S. Lincoln Blvd. #285, Venice, CA 90291
- **Mint**, PO Box 3613, Vancouver BC, Canada V6B 3Y6
- **Morphius**, PO Box 13474, Baltimore, MD 21203
- **Mortville**, PO Box 4263, Austin, TX 78765
- **Mutiny Promotions**, 301 Thelma Dr. #209, Casper, WY 82609
- **Narnack**, 381 Broadway 4th Fl., NY, NY 10013
- **Neurot**, PO Box 410209, SF, CA 94141-0209
- **Newest Industry**, Unit 100, 61 Wellfield Rd., Cardiff, CF24 3DG, UK
- **Nice Guy**, PO Box 42815, Cincinnati, OH 45242-0815
- **Nicotine**, PO Box 165, Tortona, 15057 (AL) Italy
- **No Front Teeth**, PO Box 27070, London, N2 9ZP UK
- **No Idea**, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604
- **Official UDC Headquarters**, 316 E. Gaston St. #4, Savannah, GA 31401
- **Omega Point**, 4707 N. Springfield #2F, Chicago, IL 60625
- **On/On Switch**, PO Box 641122, SF, CA 94164
- **Orange Peel**, PO Box 15207, Fremont, CA 94539
- **Out of Order**, PO Box 72775, Davis, CA 95617
- **Panic Button**, 3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703
- **Parafora**, 37 W. Pine St., Orlando, FL 32801
- **Paw Tracks**, PO Box 20368, NY, NY 10009
- **Plan-It-X**, PO Box 3521, Bloomington, IN 47402
- **Pluto**, PO Box 1201, McKinney, TX 75070
- **Polyvinyl**, PO Box 7140, Champaign, IL 61826-7140
- **Prison Jazz**, 431 Birch St., Scranton, PA 18505
- **PsychobillyUS**, www.psychobilly.us
- **Puke**, PO Box 99456, Emeryville, CA 94662
- **Punk Core**, PO Box 916, Middle Island, NY 11953
- **Punks Before Profits**, 537 Caroline St., Rochester, NY 14620
- **Radio Is Down**, PMB #1436, 120 State Ave. NE, Olympia, WA 98501
- **Raging Sea Design**, PO Box 741688, LA, CA 90004
- **Rapid Pulse**, PO Box 5075, Milford, CT 06460-1475
- **Rebellion**, Mgr. Van Roosmalenplein 24, 5213 GD Den Bosch, Holland
- **Relax-O-Matic Vibrator**, 13 Rue Terrusse, 13005 Marseille, France
- **Reptilian**, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231
- **Revelation**, PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615
- **Rip Off**, 581 Maple Ave., San Bruno, CA 94066
- **RIYL**, PO Box 2318, Times Square Station, NY, NY 10108
- **Robotic Empire**, PO Box 4211, Richmond, VA 23220
- **Rock N Roll Purgatory**, 710 Arch St., Salem, OH 44460
- **Rockin' Bones**, c/o Gualtiero Pagani, Borgo Palma 3a, 43100 Parma, Italy
- **Rodent Popsicle**, PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134
- **Rumble Gulley**, 1112 Stanley Dr., Newport, WA 99156
- **Scarey**, Casella Postale 516, Succ. 76, 10121 Torino, Italy
- **Seeland**, PO Box 1154, El Cerrito, CA 94530-1154
- **SelfMadeGod**, PO Box 46, 21500 Biala Podl, Poland
- **Shake It**, 4156 Hamilton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45223
- **Shark Soup**, PO Box 3406, 91056 Erlangen, West Germany
- **Shitgivesits**, PO Box 22661, San Diego, CA 92192-2661
- **SideOneDummy**, PO Box 2350, LA, CA 90078
- **Slutfish**, 327 Bedford Ave. #A2, Brooklyn, NY 11211
- **Smog Veil**, www.smogveil.com
- **SOS**, PO Box 3017, Corona, CA 92878
- **Southern**, PO Box 577375, Chicago, IL 60657
- **Spastics**, PO Box 42, Negaunee, MI 49866
- **Split 7**, 12405 Venice Blvd. #265, LA, CA 90066
- **Spook City**, PO Box 34891, Philadelphia, PA 19101
- **Spookshow**, PO Box 93817, Phoenix, AZ 85070-5070
- **Stardumb**, PO Box 21145, 3001 AC Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- **Steel Cage**, PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125
- **Step-1 Music**, PO Box 21, Tenterden, Kent TN30 7ZZ, England
- **Stomping Ground**, PO Box 64862, Phoenix, AZ 85082
- **Str N True**, PO Box 1299, Boston, MA 02130
- **Sudden Death**, Cascades PO Box #43001, Burnaby, BC, V5G 3H0, Canada
- **Suicide Watch**, PO Box 9599, Charlotte, NC 28299
- **Suit of Lights**, www.suitoflights.com
- **Super Secret**, PO Box 1585, Austin, TX 78767
- **Swimmingly**, attn: Patrick Smith, 155 W. 60th St. Rm. 18E3, NY, NY 10023
- **Sympathy for the Record Industry**, 4450 California Pl. #303, Long Beach, CA 90807
- **Tarantulas**, 411A Highland Ave. #348, Somerville, MA 02144
- **Teenacide**, PO Box 291121, LA, CA 90029
- **Templecombe**, PO Box 602, Bayshore, NY 11706
- **The Blastoffs**, 91 Vermont St., Rochester, NY 14609
- **Three One G**, PO Box 178262, San Diego, CA 92177
- **Tick Tick Tick**, 1324 S. 9th St., Philadelphia, PA 19147
- **TKO**, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646
- **Tragic End**, PO Box 30248, Middleburg Heights, OH 44130
- **Trashpit**, 95 Flamstead Ave., Loscoe, Heanor, Derbyshire DE75 7RP, England
- **Troublemanunlimited**, www.troublemanunlimited.com
- **Up**, PO Box 21328, Seattle, WA 98111
- **Vinyl Dog**, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646
- **Violent Hippie**, 1010 Nipisc Ave., Bremerton, WA 98310
- **Wasted Sounds**, Skologatan 110, 903 32 Umea, Sweden
- **Whoa Oh**, 21-36 43 St., 3rd Fl., Astoria, NY 11105
- **Wrench**, BCM Box 4049, London, WC1N 3XX, England
- **Yellow Belts**, 125 S. Ashland Ave., Lexington, KY 40502
- **Zaxxon Virile Action**, C.P. 1218, Sorel-Tracy, QC, Canada J3P 7L5

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"I'LL DO ANYTHING LEGAL FOR \$7.05 AN HOUR."

-FROM LAZYBONES #4

9 AND A HALF LEFT, #10, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8, 36 pgs.

This reads more like a small autobiography than anything else. I guess everyone loves to talk about themselves, but at least this guy wrote something down. It talks mostly about the author's fiancé and baby son, as well as his experiences and theories. The stories are interesting while staying mostly personal. Quitting smoking must be a drag; his writings make me even gladder I never started in the first place. The guy also likes dinosaurs... a lot. Plus points for mentioning The Bags in the favorite records section, too. The grammar and spelling could be greatly improved. Case in point: "too," "two," and "to" mean very different things; using the word "to" for every single one can get confusing and irritating to an educated reader. Simple grammar errors are not "DIY," they're just annoying. I'll let it slide and say, sans all the technical errors, *9 and a Half Left* is a good read. -Mor (9 and a Half Left, Mike Rodemann, 13426 Meri Ave, Lakewood, OH 44107)

BIG TAKEOVER, #56, \$5.99, 8 1/2 x 11, 280 pgs.

If you have a short attention span, go ahead and skip to the last sentence. I have an undying amount of respect for Jack Rabid, the publisher of *The Big Takeover*. The guy has been around since the embryonic stages of punk rock and is still as enthusiastic about music as he ever was. Although his taste in music has shifted from the extreme corners of the underground to more lightweight stuff, he writes about it with such fervor that, after reading his review of a Guided By Voices show, I felt like he just witnessed Hüsker Dü annihilating an audience at a VFW hall in 1982 or something. And even though I'm pretty sure I wouldn't like the new Doves album, his review almost makes me want to pick it up. Hell, I never thought I'd care to read a Wilco interview, let alone enjoy it, but that's *The Big Takeover* for you. (Rabid also finds a way to mention Void, the Effigies, and the Circle Jerks over the course

of the interview.) It's not *Spin* telling you what's cool or what the next big thing is; it's people with an honest-to-God love of the music that they write about. And even if you don't like the current state of indie rock, if you're just looking for overlooked gems spanning from the dawn of recorded music to hardcore punk before the knuckleheads took over, Jack's taste is immaculate; this issue's got the Raspberries (the band that directly inspired Paul Westerberg to play guitar!), and recent issues have had the Urinals, the Zombies, Savage Republic... probably every band you can think of that's worth listening to. Honestly, along with *Trouser Press*, this magazine has led me to so many amazing bands that we'll never hear on classic rock radio and will never get their due. It's one of my five favorite magazines ever and I seriously look forward to all 280 pages. Absolute highest recommendation; it's the way things should be. -Josh (249 Eldridge St #14, NY, NY 10002)

BIKE, #4, \$1.50 or trade, 5 1/2 x 8, 32 pgs.

Daniel, who does *Bike*, seems like a really cool guy, the kind of guy you could eat tacos with and talk to about records that most people have never heard of. So I don't want this review to be misconstrued as negative, because I like it and I think it has potential. It's just that if you put a sticker on your bike that says "This Bike Is a Pipebomb," park it in a pretty conspicuous place, and then find out that it's been dismantled by the cops... Dude, that's not The Man Trying To Keep You Down. Granted, it sucks, and I wouldn't wish that on my worst enemy, but come on. You have to admit it's kind of a bonehead move, right? Anyway, aside from that, there's a lot of really cool, sloppy cartoons, and I like *Bike*, but I think I'd love it if it went a bit deeper than cop stories. The split zine that he did with *List* is much better. -Josh (Daniel Shea, 1605 Park Ave #3, Baltimore, MD 21217)

BIKE, #5 / **LIST**, #6, \$2, 5 1/2 x 4 1/4, 32 pgs.

So yeah, I do like *Bike* a lot more when it's not cop stories. His half of the split is more of the sloppy cartoons that got my attention in the last issue. The illustrated stories are about busting out his teeth doing a bike jump, getting caught stealing aspirin from a drug store, and some other stuff. The *List* half is... um... well, a bunch of lists. A list of things she wants to learn (including how to build a sailboat), things to look forward to, things to accomplish this summer, that sort of thing. Both halves of the zine have a lot of charm, and a hand-screened cover always gets a thumbs up from me. I'd really like to check out future issues of both. -Josh (Daniel Shea, 1605 Park Ave #3, Baltimore, MD 21217)

CITIZINE, #8, \$3.25, 8 1/2 x 11, 48 pgs.

Lots of good stuff, including part two of their interview with Kira Roessler. Also, separate interviews with Derf Scratch and Spit Stix from Fear, with very different perspectives. About a bazillion CD reviews, including Jello Biafra with The Melvins, Frank Black and Two Pale Boys, Coffin Lids (who I love!), NOFX, Neko Case, and many more. Also some fiction, some social/political commentary, some analysis of the declining creativity of some major stars (Eminem, U2, REM), poetry, news... pretty much anything you could want. And it's all well written and cleanly laid out. Worth the \$3.25. -Brian Mosher (Citizine, 2513 West Fourth St., L.A., CA 90057)

FLESH WAVE, #1, \$3 or trade, 8 1/2 x 11, photocopied, 20 pgs.

This one features lots of original drawings, an interesting interview with the Detroit hardcore band Bill Bondsman, and a very entertaining comic about a military science experiment. Catering to the Detroit hardcore scene, there are lots of show flyers and a few reviews. It's a little difficult to read because of the way the words are laid out on the page, and much of it isn't worth the required

effort. But, some good stuff nonetheless, especially if you're from Detroit, or planning to be in Detroit any time soon. -Brian Mosher (Fleshwave, 21620 Hoffman, Saint Clair Shores, MI 48082)

HARD AND PISSSED, Vol. 1, 8 1/2 x 11, 32 pgs.

Newsprint zine with decent layout, I guess. Essentially, the entire focus of the zine consists of a series of pointed rants denoting the sad state of hardcore today. Great. Perfect topic, one that needs to be addressed, right? Especially with humor, which is what these guys are attempting to do. Unfortunately, their humor essentially consists of calling everyone they take issue with 1) homos, 2) fags 3) pussies and/or 4) bitches. By page three, they've exhausted every possible combination thereof and are just shamelessly repeating themselves. What's worse, the writing just isn't that good. Guys, I suggest spending less time complaining about other people's haircuts and doing uninteresting interviews with Madball, who pretty much sucked the first time around, and spending more time with the old thesaurus. And give proof-reading a shot. Edit, edit, edit. -Keith Rosson (c.rap.com)

IT'S ALL GRAVY, #8, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 30 pgs.

Enthusiastic ska zine put out by kids in Compton. Yeah, it's totally sloppy and doesn't stray far from the standard zine agenda, but there are a few things here that made it interesting. One thing: all the bands interviewed or profiled (Los Skabrones, Las Ultrasonics and Rude Pleague) in this issue are Hispanic, women, or kids under eighteen, or a combination thereof. That alone sets this zine apart. Say all you want about the undying power of white kids in tight pants screaming and gibbering about their broken hearts; these folks are playing ska, a genre of music that's been cashed-out commercially for years, at backyard parties in an economically fucked locale, parties that are routinely busted by cops, oftentimes by force. If nothing else, I admire this zine for the simple sin-

cerity that exudes from it. This issue also includes a few reviews, an L.A. scene report/show listing, reprinted articles, a story, and a letter from a prisoner. I mean, ska doesn't interest me a bit, and the writing and layout here is more than a little rough around the edges, but the earnestness and perseverance shines through here. If you like the genre and live in the area, hit these kids with a letter and a buck. —Keith Rosson (Nick G. c/o Libros Revo, 312 W. 8th St., LA, CA 90014)

JUNKET, #1, \$3,
5½ x 8½, 36 pgs.

I haven't laughed this hard in a loooooong time. It's a bunch of quick stories about stuff that's happened to the guy during his stint as a taxi driver, and it's completely fucking hysterical. From a bunch of cokeheads who yell out "Taxi Driver doesn't give a fuck!" to Ted Nugent's assistant, it's all here and you'll be able to read the whole thing in twenty minutes. Can't wait for number two; it's like *Revenge of the Lawn*, but with punk rock and taxis! —Josh (Justin Cummings, PO Box 7183, Pittsburgh, PA 15213)

KERBLOOM!, #51, 4 x 5½, letterpressed, 12 pgs.

Super-short essay written by a guy who's apparently part of the Slingshot Collective; the essay focuses on his difficulty differentiating anti-capitalist endeavors and projects with capitalist work- and production-models. In other words, the trouble the collective had with partaking in projects that have inherently anti-capitalist intentions and then trying to discern if they should stick to the work model of "supply and demand" for a certain Slingshot project that's gotten huge over the past couple of years—the Slingshot pocket calendar. It is okay because the people involved are unpaid volunteers and profits go to fund the paper? Is it not okay because certain distributors are marketing the purchase of the calendar as a way to *fight* capitalism? He doesn't come to any conclusions by the end of the zine, but I've rarely read such a short essay that's been written with this much clarity. If the intention here was to get the reader *thinking*, then this guy did great. —Keith Rosson (Artnoose, PO Box 3525, Oakland, CA 94609)

LAZYBONES, #4, \$1,
5½ x 8½, 27 pgs.

More diary than anything else, this is a well-written, often humorous look inside the life of a semi-employed aspiring writer in Portland, Oregon. He tells about his attempt at a cleansing fast, his appearance on the local news program, and his attempts at finding odd-jobs by sticking flyers all over the city, in which he says, "I'll do anything legal for \$7.05 an hour." You've gotta love the honesty of

that. —Brian Mosher (Marc Parker, 2000 NE 42 Ave #221, Portland, OR 97213)

MEDIA WHORE, #5,
\$2, 5½ x 8½, 32 pgs.

Generally focuses on feminism and the media's portrayal of women, from what I gather. This issue specifically covers whether or not Riot Grrrl really is or is not a dead movement, the advent of the website www.takebackthenews.com, various zine and Ladyfest reviews and a pretty in-depth review of video games that positively portray women. It's a decent read, I suppose, if a little static in presentation. At times, the articles read like straight-up journalism, with a severe lack of emphasis on the personality of the writer. A spiced-up layout, more personable writing, and not using that goddamn Courier font would have helped. —Keith Rosson (Media Whore, 12 B Walcott St., Malden, MA 02148)

MY VIVID BLANKET, #3, \$2 or trade, 5½ x 8½, 32 pgs.

This one's something I can get into; *My Vivid Blanket* #3 is nothing more than a standard, solid, quality zine, and I don't mean that in a bad way at all. There's nothing flashy about it—there's no insane die-cut tri-fold stenciled cover, there's no spot-color slipsheets with cryptic illustrations inserted anywhere, it's just some kid and his friends, an exacto knife, a gluestick, a copy machine and a shitload of care. Considering how much crap is out there that's either haphazardly thrown together, that looks and reads like shit, or is trying to pass itself off as "intellectual" when it's really just obfuscated and pretentious, it's absolutely refreshing to just read a zine that isn't attempting to be what it's not. *MVB* #3 is subtitled "Table Manners," i.e. it's a collection of writing by Corey and some friends about their experiences in the food industry: something that all of us can probably relate to. Some of it's hilarious, some of it's disturbing (foodworker revenge stories always give me the shivers) but the thread running through it all is that these are intelligent kids who've taken the time to write their stories well. Like I said, the care here is evident. Keep putting these out. They'll only get better. —Keith Rosson (Corey c/o My Vivid Blanket, PO Box 7880, Tampa, FL 33673)

OH NO! THE ROBOT, #6, \$2 or a mixtape trade, 5½ x 8½, 28 pgs.

This basically revolves around a guy and his relationships with his roommates, his band, and a girl that he has a crush on. No, but it's good. There's noticeable similarities to *Cometbus*, but one of those similarities is that it's easy to read and easy to relate to. He talks about their house and their jobs and their day-to-day lives, but it never gets

bogged down by trying to be profound and he never tries to be too literary for his own good. Overall, it's just kind of like getting to know someone during a long drive, pure and simple. —Josh (829 Main St, Saskatoon, SK S7H 0K2 Canada)

PROFANE EXISTENCE, #47,

\$5, 8½ x 11, 100 pgs.

I'm stoked on *P.E.*'s new format: perfect-bound, full-color glossy cover and offset printed. Higher price but higher quality. Really clean layout and 90% of the photos are great. Interviews with Extinction of Mankind, Blown to Bits, Ballast, Spoke Pizza Collective, Avskum, Iskra and punk artist Kieran Plunkett—nice job on interviewing non-band punks. Also features a Jilted/Beyond Description tour journal, and a lengthy, well-written article regarding the current Administration's relation to the Christian Right and why it's doing what it's doing in regards to same-sex marriage. When I was a younger kid, I'd pick up the occasional issue of *P.E.* but felt fairly disconnected from its area of focus, music-wise. As it stands now, I still couldn't give much of a shit about the bands they choose to cover, but between the rest of the material here and the fairly newfound quality of the zine's presentation, I'm backing this one for sure. —Keith Rosson (Profane Existence, PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

PROOF I EXIST, #6, \$1, 5½ x 8½, photocopied, 32 pgs.

Hand-written zine from a nice-sounding kid named Billy. He talks about his dog, how much his dad rips, spitting on jocks that gave him shit, spending the night on the street so he gets a small taste of what the homeless experience every day. Nothing too earth-shattering; mostly what you see is what you get. It wasn't the most riveting read, but he seems like he'd be a fun kid to hang out with. —Keith Rosson (Proof I Exist c/o Billy, 1357 W. Augusta #1, Chicago, IL 60622)

RETURN OF MONKEYS IN THE SUN, THE, \$4 or trade, 5½ x 8½, 52 pgs.

Emma writes a fun zine full of lengthy show, record, and movie reviews. There are profiles on John Waters and Frida Kahlo, a travel diary of the time she and her boyfriend spent in Mexico City and a nicely written memorial to John Peel. Nothing groundbreaking, but she's positive and excited about everything she writes about. There's a monkey on every page and the cover is pasted over with cloth, colored paper, and even strips of weird green and black fake fur; you can tell what you're getting here, just by looking at it. —Keith Rosson (Emma, 34 Sydney St., Brighton, BN1 4EP, UK)

SKATE AND ANNOY, Vol. 2 No. 2, \$3, 5½ x 6½, 54 pgs.

As you can probably tell by the title, this is a skateboarding-related zine. The thing that makes it stand out, though, is that it's put together by people who are really emotionally invested in it. As with any subculture, there's the people on one level who have a passing interest in it because it's cool, and then there's the people with a deeper love for it. A good analogy for punk rock would be Warped Tour versus basement shows, and *Skate and Annoy* is a perfect antidote to advertising-driven skateboarding mags that are marketed towards the people who eat up the Tony Hawk video games. Even if you have no interest in skating, this is still a great read because it's done by people who have been skating since before Hollywood made another Dogtown movie and will still be skating when Gilbert Godfried is hosting the new Dogtown movie at two in the morning on the USA Network. —Josh (3439 NE Sandy Blvd, PMB #666, Portland, OR 97232)

SNAKEPIT QUARTERLY, #11, \$2, 5½ x 8½, 36 pgs.

Goddamn, what can I say about this one? Just about everyone reading *Razorcake* has probably read an issue of *Snakepit*. And if you haven't, check it out. The idea (three-panel comics for each day of Ben's life) is brilliant, it's hilariously executed, and the capper is that Ben just financially squeaks by, consistently, by living his life. As in, he works part time, plays in bands, tours, travels and does these comics—the debauchery of his lifestyle nearly fucking pays for itself. I'm the same age as Ben and know that I just don't have the same kind of stamina he does, which makes the reading of these comics all the more compelling. Intellectual? Naw. That's not, I don't think, the intent. Entertaining? Yes. Addictive? Sure. I'm a fan. Also: the cover's another Christy Road piece that's just frickin' gorgeous. —Keith Rosson (Young American Comics, 4409 Illinois St., San Diego, CA 92116)

STATIONAERY, #4 and 5, \$2.00 each, 5½ x 8½, 24 pgs.

This is the sort of thing that makes doing these reviews worthwhile. Both of these issues are filled with fascinating pieces of short fiction and poetry, along with intriguing—sometimes breathtaking—art work. Their contributors come from all over the world, and offer a wide variety of viewpoints on life in the 21st Century. They're both so good I actually re-read them, in their entirety. When was the last time you did that with a zine? —Brian Mosher (Stationary, 4456 Avenue del Hotel-de-ville, Montreal, Quebec H2W2H5, Canada)

TED, #1, 4 x 4, 24 pgs.

Ted is a cat. *Ted* is a bunch of pictures of Ted. Some are of Ted napping, some are of Ted playing, some are of Ted walking, and some are of Ted just chilling out, but it's all Ted, all the time. There's no address, but I bet if you point your browser to www.crap-aesthetic.com and do some poking around, you might find this and you might find a ton of other cool stuff. —Josh (ted@crap-aesthetic.com)

UNDERGROUND SCREAMS, #2, free, donations accepted, 4 x 5, 20 pgs.

The product of a cooperative type outfit, wanting simply to share their creativity with anyone who's interested, this comes packaged inside a folded brown paper lunch bag. And it's good stuff. Poetry accompanied by original artwork, which consists of a variety of different media—sketches, photography, cartoon-style illustrations. There's no real theme, but it all has to do with disenfranchisement and disenchantment with the status quo. Send these kids a couple of bucks, or some stamps at least. —Brian Mosher (www.undergroundscreams.com)

UNDERGROUND SCREAMS, #2, free (but a donation might be nice), 4 x 5½, 28 pgs.

DIY-spirited zine that consists almost entirely of poetry and photos. Their initial statement is that "anything can be art" and that they've put the zine out simply as a group of kids expressing their creativity. A quick read; hit 'em up if you want to read some poems. —Keith Rosson (undergroundscreams@gmail.com)

VERBICIDE, #13, \$3.95, 8 x 10 ½, glossy cover, bleached paper, 64 pgs.

Jackson Ellis is putting together a stronger and stronger zine. The interviews are thorough, interesting, and diverse (from Ian MacKaye, to Amy Schroeder, editor of the feminist magazine *Venus*, to a graffiti artist, to Tim Kerr). *Verbicide* is to the point of that they do what they do so well, I may not be initially interested in a subject or a person, but how they approach them and interact with them is engaging, memorable, and well worth the time spent reading. It's a good mag by an editor who's fighting the good fight. —Todd (www.scissorpress.com)

WONKA VISION, #27,

\$2.95, 8½ x 11, 90 pgs. Okay. I have no ideological problem with bands on major labels (or bigger indie labels, for that matter) or people that support bands on major labels. I *do*, however, have a problem with people that support bands on major labels waving the banner for independent music. Why put Jimmy Eat World, *who have never put out a full-length album on an independent record label ever*, on your cover under a banner that says, "Your source for independent music and thoughts." If Jimmy Eat World thinks their place in the world is on a major label, fine, and if you like Jimmy Eat World, that's fine too, but for the love of Christ, *since when is independent music bankrolled by Capitol Records?* I mean, I understand that there comes a time when you realize that you'd like to make a little bit of money off of a magazine that you put a lot of hard work into, but there are ways to do that without having to put ads for the new Juliette Lewis and the Licks album on the back cover, just like there are ways to be in a band without having a video on MTV2 and playing shows at rock venues. —Josh (PO Box 63680, Philadelphia, PA 19147)

ZISK, #10, \$2, 5½ x 6½, 22 pgs.

I figure I've already run out of ways to creatively say, "Read *Zisk*, it rules," but there's something I think I need to get off my chest. I never thought I'd say this, but there's a little bit too much Clemens bashing in this issue. I mean, yeah, I hate the guy, too. Not only do I hate the guy, I hate every team he's ever played for just by association. But you know, I read *Zisk* for a couple of quick jabs about what a poodle the guy is and then I'm ready to move on. I don't need to see his stupid face on every page (it's actually only on one page, but it *feels* like every page); nobody needs to see that, not even Hitler. Here's my thinking: maybe if we ignore him, he'll disappear like Freddy in the first *Nightmare on Elm Street* movie. It seems like the fact that he's an old asshole has actually *helped* his career, so maybe he gets stronger every time we make a joke about him? I don't know. All I know is that the guy has been playing professional baseball for the entire duration of my life so far and I'm willing to try anything to make that stop. Read *Zisk*, it rules. —Josh (801 Eagles Ridge Rd, Brewster, NY 10509)



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Alternative: 25 Poems

by Doug Saretsky, 27 pgs.

Doug Saretsky, guitarist of Envenomed and publisher of *Vile Dominion* fanzine, has put together an often thought-provoking chapbook of twenty-five poems that continue the poetic underbelly tradition of Rimbaud, the Beats, and Bukowski, and as with those Bards of the Margin, Saretsky makes good use of metaphor to create some particularly wrenching images. He is particularly effective when he's writing on topics such as the often ridiculous and clichéd nature of what is supposedly avant garde. One of the best qualities of Saretsky's work is his thoughtful rumination on how we unwittingly create traps for ourselves, be it a relationship, a job, needs and wants, or even more general and inclusive conceptions such as what constitutes the "alternative" when defiance of conventionalism becomes conventionalized itself, such as the "garden variety punk rock shiteheads" to whom he refers in "Columbus Damn Poem." This is not to say that the poet is divesting himself from the underbelly and creating a new underbelly beneath that one; at the same time these poems convey a sense of pragmatism regarding such traps and a begrudging acceptance of the limitations of originality. Saretsky's work senses the need to defy all convention for its own sake, even the conventions of the "alternative," but still acknowledges that we must knowingly participate in the same community that is to be defied, negotiating the thin lines between creative restlessness, comfort, and complacency.

The one problem that I have with Saretsky's work is a matter of economy. His poems tend to have a rambling, conversational style that freely uses enjambment over several lines. Admittedly, such unlimited application of free verse is now quite the norm in the world of modern poetry, particularly among subcultures and the lunatic fringe who make use of free verse for that very reason—a means of freeing

the poet from convention. Alas, as Saretsky's work so succinctly points out regarding other areas of alternative thought, even free verse has become clichéd and banal, and I feel that too often the ideas in these poems (and their power) are blunted by too many words finding their way to the paper. Saretsky's best poems in this volume are those in which he maintains more rigid control regarding the poetic image—poems in which there is brevity and economy in the imagery, so that it has a much keener impact on the reader. Very often Saretsky's final lines to a poem are wonderful in this regard; in a few short lines he will arrive at a brief yet powerful conclusion to all that has come before, but I'd like to see that powerful brevity throughout the poem. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Black Hoody Nation, 1970 Westwood Northern Blvd. #5, Cincinnati, OH 45225)

Angel Dust Apocalypse

by Jeremy Robert Johnson

This collection of short stories is not difficult in the literary sense; it is difficult in the shocking and nauseating visual image sense. *Angel Dust Apocalypse* hits the reader in the guts and goes to work.

The stories are void of heroes, and few of the characters possess any likable traits. The true core of these tales seems to be the ideas, and not the humans created to act them out. Within these pages, the dark underbelly of the human subconscious is captured: those things people think about but never mention, fearing a breach of proper human etiquette.

Johnson gives his readers extraordinarily deep cuts out of a defining moment in the lives of his characters. They find themselves in situations that few have experienced, but that many of us carry in the back of our minds along with our deepest fears. They find themselves on bad trips, riddled with parasites, facing nuclear holocaust, surrendering to their own delusions, and craving attention so desperately that they are willing

to employ any means necessary.

There are no happy endings. In fact, none of the stories contain any real denouement. The reader is left with an imprint on their psyche, and free to draw their own conclusions, which are often more grisly and elaborate than any definitive words laid down by an author.

I could not put down this book once I picked it up. I am not sure if it was because I was so enthralled by the imaginatively gruesome scenarios, or because of the realization that the sooner I stopped reading, the sooner I would be left with my thoughts, free to imagine each tale's conclusion. —Denise (Eraserhead Press, 205 NE Bryant, Portland, OR 97211, eraserheadpress.com)

Comics Journal, The, #267, \$9.95, 204 pp.

Wow, i think i used to cut up copies of this magazine in the '80s to make collages for my fanzine, except it used to be a little more... uh... geez... "normal" back then. You know, it had staples in the middle, and superheros on the cover, and black and white newsprint on the insides—kinda what you'd expect from a magazine about comic books. Somewhere, in the interceding years, *The Comics Journal* has become this sort of dry, scholarly, almost academic square-bound tome that has little more graphic gusto than a tech school course catalog. SAMPLE DIALOGUE: "...here is graphically the reason why most moderns cannot be brought to any penetrating or rupturing realizations about the culture that has them in thralldom. 'Postmodernism' is a presumptuous academicist school of theorizing that assumed the previous and arcane 'death of modernity' bestows some kind of privileged standpoint on their thinking. In actuality postmodernists are nothing but crypto-modernists par excellence, selective and self-unreflective enforcers of the modern ideological imprisonment: they are bourgeois intellectuals who imagine they can intellectualize their way out of being bourgeois." ... uh... okay, so we won't be discussing *New Avengers* any time soon, i take it? I mean, geez, i'm all for high thinking and such, but i tend to like my comic book related discourse a bit more lowbrow, i'm afraid. I also tend to like my comic book related discourse to not cost me ten bucks. Then again, i'm kind of a comic book dumbass who has read little else but Marvel and DC superhero books for the last thirty-five years, so consider the source. In any event, this issue is heavy on features on the recently departed Will Eisner, which is cool... they actually devote about forty straight pages to reprinting some of Eisner's early work, but the fact that two big chunks of said forty pages are given to "A Medal for Bowzer" and "The Sad Case of Waiting Room Willie"—essentially pro-animal experimentation and anti-socialized medicine propaganda comics—kind of seems like a poor choice of materials, if you ask me. I'd write a letter of complaint, but i can't spell "bourgeois" without using spell-check, so i guess they're off the hook. —Rev. Nørb (Fantagraphics Books, 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle WA 98115)

For Workers' Power: The Selected Writings of Maurice Brinton

by Maurice Brinton, edited by David Goodway, 380 pgs.

Holy shit, I am out of my league here. Where's Maddy Tight Pants? She actually knows what she's talking about. She actually comprehends this stuff. She actually reads a paragraph like "...And stress that no collective autonomy is meaningful which does not have organizational repercussions. Autonomous activity and life—in the realm of practice or in the realm of ideas—is impossible in hierarchically-structured organizations. As Bookchin points out 'the

tragedy of the socialist movement is that it opposes organization to spontaneity and tries to assimilate the social process to political and organizational instrumentalism" and understands it, probably fairly effortlessly, the first time she reads it. Not me. I feel that I am, at best, vastly unqualified to review this thing. It's a tome. It's a gorgeous book, but it's a tome: 380-some pages, tight leading, ten-point type, footnotes galore. There is a lot of stuff here and frankly, by the time I finished Dave Goodway's introduction (seventeen pages in and of itself) and footnotes, I was already overwhelmed. So, the following consists of what I, a fucking dolt when it comes to even the basest tenets of socialism and/or libertarianism (which is what the majority of this book covers), could cull and decipher from *For Workers' Power*.

1) Members of libertarian/ socialist/ anarchist groups in 1960s Britain disbanded, splintered, reformed, and switched teams more than Dischord bands did back in 1988.

2) Though not entirely, the majority of this book actually consists of Maurice Brinton's creative translations of Cornelius Castoriades's writings in French for *Solidarity*, a magazine/pamphlet outlet/ activist group with which Brinton was involved with for years.

3) Brinton is at his best when he manages to merge political theory with personal experience—his diary entries from both the Belgian General Strike of 1960 and yeah, his two weeks spent in Paris in May of 1968 are prime examples—when he writes like this, Brinton is able to build a body out of a working skeleton of political theory and the flesh-and-blood, I-was-there quality of eyewitness testimony, something that's practically necessary if you want to keep the attention of a reader with my less-than-working knowledge of socialism and/or libertarianism.

4) As a whole, I admire AK Press—as an anarchist publishing house it's seemingly indefatigable, one that's done an incredible amount to resuscitate and reprint old (but still valid and important) texts and collections and make them available to a new readership. At the same time, like many of their titles, I wouldn't suggest this one for the layperson just getting into the topic—at times Brinton's writing is incredibly stiff, and there are internal references to so many other texts and authors (the majority of them dating back to the '60s or earlier) that it's easy to become overwhelmed. Still, I'd imagine that to those with a working knowledge of socialism and libertarianism, and those familiar with Brinton and his output, would be thrilled to have so much of his previously-out-of-print work collected into one book. —Keith Rosson (AK Press, 674-A 23rd Street, Oakland, CA 94612-1163)

Orlando's Punk Rock Flashback & Tattoo Art Book

Compiled by Orlando Januar, 128 pgs.

Orlando Januar is the guy who's published the Swiss fanzine *Artcore* for about a billion years. This book, like the title states, compiles tons of his tattoo flash, as well as everything from old shirt and poster designs to record covers and even Christmas cards he's drawn. It's obviously a labor of love; tons of work went into the visual presentation of the material here. Januar's style, if not his content, is pretty traditional; it's solid, mostly brush-drawn stuff that

reminds me a bit of Crumb stuff or those old hippie comics, *The Fabulous Furry Freak Bros*. As far as the content: there's the requisite collections of skulls, punks with guitars, women with monstrous boobs, rats, etc. He's as consistent in his execution when he's doing color stuff as he is when he's just doing black and white images, and that's pretty amazing, considering there's material here that dates back twenty-five years. Subsections of the book include "T-shirts & Logos," "Record Covers," "Fanzine Covers & Illustrations," and "Pin Ups"; the second half of the book is made up of his tattoo stuff, which I found to be less interesting, if only because the tats and sketches he included are less of a cultural and historical landmark of a lifestyle and type of music that I love, and more of just a series of images. Plus, his tattoo work, while solid, is made up of stuff like hearts, flowers, dragons, tigers; stuff that doesn't really interest me.

This thing's self-financed and limited to 1,200 copies—the love and care is totally evident. Hopefully he'll find good distribution for the book, sell out, and eventually even be able to reprint it. Someone who's been working this tirelessly for this long, I think, should have something like this—some kind of testament, some gathered collection of his output. My only complaints, and they're minor, is that some of the backgrounds of some of the images have so much Photoshopped alterations and coloring that it detracts from the actual image itself. And secondly, this guy has been around forever—I would have loved to have had at least a minor amount of information accompanying the images, beyond "Single Cover" or "A Quite Popular T-Shirt Design." But again, minor complaints; the book's beautiful and Januar's worked long and hard on the material in here; he deserves all the praise he'll undoubtedly get from this. —Keith Rosson (ZCM Records/Road To Ruin Europe, Josef & Shelley Loderer, Am Kesselhuas 9, 79576 Weil am Rhein, Germany, www.zcmrecords.com)

Rocket to Riyadh: Tales from the Terror Age

By Jason Galore

I've seen how long the *Razorcake* book reviews get, and how long they normally are, and although I quite enjoyed Galore's writing style I'm not so sure I can fill up that much space talking about it. The book is divided into four parts. The first part, entitled "The Machine Does No Good, It's Gotta Go," is a wonderful story that is totally Sean Carswell meets Hunter S. Thompson set against a backdrop of post 9-11 United States' politics and day-to-day life. The rest of the book reads like a blog or journal that purposely melts prose and poetry, fiction and non-fiction. To tell you the truth, I've never really kept a journal, I've never REALLY had a blog, and I've never been addicted to reading them, so the rest of the book kind of lost my interest. If Galore had kept the book going as he had started it by following the story with similar short stories or by continuing the web of a plot he had begun, this book might have become a quick favorite. —Mr. Z (Jason Galore is Famous, LLC, 24500 Galena Ave., Belle Plaine, MN 56011)



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Blank the World: DVD

Signs of the impending apocalypse: 1) When punk-oriented groups and their releases shy away from profanity. In this case, there seems to be an aversion to the word “fuck” in the titling of this disc. If you’re fucking afraid to use the fucking word, don’t even fucking allude to it, as you just fucking look like a bunch of fucking half-stepping sellout fucks. And don’t think the irony of so-called “punk” DVD makers being averse to the word “fuck” while happily including a promo for another of their DVDs featuring dumb so-called “punk chicks” showing off their tits and scumbag rock stars cooing and bragging about fucking said chicks is lost on the viewer—ain’t no hesitation to exploit the drunk and the stupid, but god forbid you should threaten sales by including a profane word in the title. 2) When an international collection of fifteen bands yields a grand total of one good song from one band, and that band is the Blind Pigs, while the other fourteen sound like they’re content to phone in watered down approximations of pop and “street” punk. Seeing as in a lot of the countries represented, sporting a mohawk is tantamount to open rebellion against the government and, therefore, punishable by death, one can’t help but wonder if this is a collection of government-approved faux punk bands. Given the influx of “Christian punk” bands in recent years, it ain’t all that far outta the realm of possibility. 3) When your average coffee house folksinger is more of a threat to the status quo than the average “overground” punk band, and these bands are only too happy to demonstrate this fact. 4) When a DVD this bad, this wretched, this utterly lacking in any sort of quality or interest is not only made, but actually has a market. 5) That it is only one of thousands of bad, bad “punk” DVDs being marketed out there. This DVD is sooooo beyond being labeled as shit. This is stuff that even shit doesn’t want to be associated with. Let’s just hope that when the apocalypse does start revving up, the people responsible for this are on the front line, sans weapons. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.intermediavideo.com)

Climb off Ease up and Suck Down: DVD

Wow, great bands and little skits in a DVD—and it’s rad. Recess Records buddies, so loads of stuff in San Pedro, and bands that sort of run in that circle. Craig Flipy put it all together from tons of videotape of dickering around and bands playing live and hanging out. A wonderful antithesis to Live at House of Rules arena shows—this is live footage in record stores, bite-sized clubs, warehouses, fucking bedrooms and a concrete slab at the beach. With the stage exception of the great Dillinger Four... but yeah, coz it’s them... duh. Loads and loads and choads of the best current bands like Toys That Kill, Leeches, Fleshes and Shark Pants and more, mixed with rare stuff like Panty Raid and the late, lamented Blacks (AZ). And the skits... usually it’s only funny if you know them. I stand corrected. Two hours of funnin’. Get it before Bigfoot does. —Speedway Randy (Recess Records, PO Box 1666, San Pedro, CA 90733-1666)

Tales of the Unexplained: DVD

It seems like this is a collection of four episodes from a failed TV Show, sort of along the lines of *In Search Of* or *Ripley’s Believe it*



or Not. They pretty much cover all of the bases—aliens, serial killers, ghosts, vampires, monsters, all that kinda stuff. Each episode is narrated documentary style, a la *Unsolved Mysteries*, but pretty low-budget, giving it the feel of a local news broadcast. My guess is that these episodes were all shot together to use as a TV series, and it never got picked up, but they figured they might as well put it on a DVD, since they went to the trouble to make it anyway. It’s fun, and it’s about as good as anything else on TV. —Ben Snakepit (Crescent Entertainment, no address)

Toxic Narcotic: Live in Boston: DVD

You gotta love Toxic Narcotic’s dedication to the ‘core. After nearly sixteen years, they continue to be active in the punk scene, both locally and internationally. Even if I haven’t adored every single release that their Rodent Popsicle label has put out, I freely concede that their hit vs. miss ratio is extraordinarily high, and this DVD easily falls under the “hit” column. Recorded live at a show celebrating their fifteenth anniversary, all the stops were pulled and they cranked out one fine document of this band at their finest, with multiple cameras, 5.1 surround sound, a spirited performance and some wild ass fans going bonkers. You get twenty-two songs here, with most of their hits represented (although “Beer in the Shower” is noticeably and annoyingly absent), plus a couple of bonus videos and some footage of their fans waiting to get in. While it could be argued that few hardcore bands deserve such a fuss these days, there is no question that Toxic Narcotic is one of those bands. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rodent Popsicle, PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134)

X: Live in Los Angeles: DVD

Outside of saying that Exene’s embarrassingly clumsy attempts at self-promotion and securing her place in the punk rock hall of fame have effectively killed the mountains of respect I once had for her, I will try to limit my comments to those of an X fan, which I have considered myself for more than two decades. While I won’t go so far as to say that they are the be-all and end-all of Los Angeles punk, as I think no band can possibly embody an entire scene, I will say that they are one of many that molded how L.A. punk was regarded. Being a fervent follower of the punk rock religion, I have partaken many, many times of the Los Angeles/Wild Gift/Under the Big Black Sun/More Fun in the New World communion wafers and continue to do so regularly. Needless to say, this was well worth the time it took to watch it. Everything about the production is just great, from the camera editing to the sound, the latter of which was handled by Billy Zoom himself. The band is in as fine a form as

I remember them ever being. They look great and, more importantly, they sound great, which is saying quite a bit considering their “prime” was more than twenty years ago. While it always feels like a burn when a band sticks solely to their tried and true “hits” rather than expending the effort to come up with new music, in the case of X it seems to be a better idea to do things this way, as anything they’ve done from Ain’t Love Grand to the present has been, um, not too hot. One need do nothing more than play “Sex and Dying in High Society” and “Burning House of Love” back to back to see how bad things truly got. Here they run through twenty-one tracks of some of their finest work, from the opener, “Your Phone’s Off the Hook (but You’re Not)” to the closing cover of the Doors’ “Soul Kitchen,” and while it would’ve been nice to hear renditions of “I Must Not Think Bad Thoughts” or rarities like “Heater” or “Delta 88,” the tunes they do serve up are done so well that you don’t miss what they didn’t do. Watching this reminded me of why I dug ‘em so long ago: not only were their songs intelligent and intellectual without coming off as pretentious, they fucking rocked, and they still fucking rock. That, my friends, is what is most important, and that is what pisses me off most about Ms. Cervenka throwing her ego around: if you rock, the world knows it, and Exene can rest assured that their place in the punk pantheon is quite secure. Take a cue from your band mates and humbly let others toot your horn for you. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.shoutfactory.com)

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